

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.869
8 March 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 March 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Juan Enrique Vega

(Chile)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I call to order the 869th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, allow me to extend a cordial welcome, both on behalf of the Conference and on my behalf, to the representatives of non-governmental organizations who are with us today. As you know, today is International Women's Day. Accordingly, and pursuant to established practice here in the Conference, participants in the annual disarmament seminar held on the occasion of International Women's Day have addressed a message to the Conference. I am sure that I speak for the Conference when I extend our best wishes to all the women who are present at this forum and say how much we appreciate their steadfast commitment to peace and disarmament, as well as their abiding interest in our work.

I would also like once again to welcome Ambassador Eui-Yong Chung, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, who is attending the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament for the first time. You are very welcome, Ambassador, and we look forward to excellent cooperation with you.

I would also like to greet Dr. Rajmah Hussain, the new Ambassador of Malaysia. We are very pleased to welcome her on a day such as today, when we are celebrating International Women's Day. Together with greeting her, we would also like to greet all the other lady ambassadors present.

Before giving the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference, I would like to inform you that, as I said in the presidential consultations yesterday, it is my intention immediately after the present plenary meeting to convene informal open-ended consultations on possible measures to continue our consultations on the programme of work and other complementary activities, in order to facilitate agreement with respect to that programme.

I would now like to ask the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, to read out the message addressed to the Conference by the participants in the seminar.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): Mr. President, before reading the joint non-governmental organization statement, I would like to take this opportunity to join you in congratulating very sincerely all the women present here, both the members of the delegations and representatives of the non-governmental organizations on International Women's Day on their contribution to the activities of our Conference for the encouragement of practical deeds.

I now have the honour to read the joint non-governmental organization statement to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament.

"Distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament, the participants of the International Women's Day Disarmament Seminar in Geneva appreciate the

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

opportunity to address you once again on International Women's Day. It is one of the few occasions that the concerns and wishes of non-governmental organizations can be voiced in this unique forum, in which concrete measures can, and have been taken to rid the world of specific weapons and advance toward disarmament. However, we must state that we have been deeply disappointed and are disheartened over the fact that opportunities have been missed during these past several years and so little has been achieved during this period.

"Mr. President, we urge the Conference on Disarmament and especially the member States not to allow the deadlock to continue, and in that sense we wish to make the following observations:

"Mr. President, nowadays the perceived need for armament is not so much related to the conquest of territory but more to the imposition of ideology. Throughout history, there have been nations that have believed themselves to be superior to others and who consequently sought to impose their way of life and their beliefs on others by threat or use of force. They were mistaken. One cannot produce good by means of threats and brute force. Only persuasion and good example can teach good governance.

"Recent developments in the international security environment have brought us back to a crossroads, where we have been so often during the past half century, deciding whether to take the path of cooperation on which the United Nations is founded, or the path of military confrontation. The fate of the Conference on Disarmament is both an indicator and a significant determining factor as to which will be followed. Knowing that in our present world the path of confrontation can only lead to universal disaster, we urge the Conference to address the political difficulties and differences within the relevant negotiations rather than letting them become the destructive means of blocking further progress.

"There have been remarkable successes in the field of arms limitation and restraint and a number of them were achieved in this chamber. Many treaties were born from humble beginnings with General Assembly resolutions. One such is the Biological Weapons Convention, which has now reached a crucial stage in its path towards more effective implementation, as we wait to see if dominant countries and pharmaceutical interests will allow the current verification negotiations to succeed. Let us also note that, during this past half century, with only a very few exceptions, arms control treaties have been observed and no State has withdrawn from a major arms control treaty, whether multilateral or bilateral. This is a significant record of achievement and commitment to restraint and good sense - a record that should be maintained.

"What a great contribution this can be to the United Nations-declared Decade of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World that we have just entered. A culture of peace means a modified value system. Pride in the observance of

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

treaty commitments, pride in withholding vetoes, pride in refraining from power games and concentrating solely on the future welfare of humanity. It is in that spirit that we call upon you immediately to accept and implement the work programme proposal contained in document CD/1624, particularly paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

"The time has come to put aside interpretations as to what might be discussed under the heading of preparation, before any subsequent negotiations are allowed to begin. Of course, such negotiations should not inhibit or be a substitute for progress in other direct inter-State or regional negotiations, but that consideration should apply as the usual practice. Negotiations have to start somewhere. The groundwork must be laid somehow. Those who have followed the work of this multilateral negotiating body - including those watching from the gallery and those who have been kept informed of your work over the years - believe that, at least for the first year, the substantial work necessary to prepare the groundwork for treaties would be much the same whether called negotiations or pre-negotiations. The point is to get started. Furthermore, we urge that, while pre-negotiations or negotiations on these important issues are taking place, States refrain from pursuing further research and testing of any devices that could undermine the talks.

"We urge you and the capitals that you represent to turn your thoughts to the distant future when others will occupy the places you hold today. Because of your endeavours, our descendants will have the chance of life, health and peace. Or not. Your actions should be guided so as to earn their respect.

"Concerning the Conference's agenda item on a comprehensive programme of disarmament, we wish to underline the importance we give to the question of small arms.

"Mr. President, in view of the forthcoming third Preparatory Committee meeting for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, we would like to mention that this year's International Women's Day Disarmament Seminar is entitled 'In the line of fire: A gender perspective on small arms proliferation, peace-building and conflict resolution'.

"The pattern of violent conflict and arms transfers has significantly changed in recent years. United Nations studies estimate that around 300 manufacturers in more than 70 countries are producing small arms and light weapons. While a significant number of these weapons end up in the hands of State forces, a large number are found in the hands of irregular armies, communal factions, crime and drug syndicates, as well as individuals.

"An overwhelming majority of conflicts have been fought with small arms and light weapons: Of the 49 regional conflicts waged since 1990 small arms and light weapons have been the weapons of choice in 46. They kill almost as many people in

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countries that are not at war. In post-conflict situations interpersonal violence replaces violence between warring factions if weapons remain in circulation, and in many other countries small arms figure prominently in violent crimes, domestic assault, rape, sexual violence, suicides and accidents - legally or illegally possessed. An estimated 500,000 to 700,000 lives are claimed each year by the use of these weapons. This is an average of 1,700 deaths per day or one person dying every minute.

"We recognize that the availability of small arms is not the cause of armed conflict, but their easy and cheap accessibility facilitates the transformation of social and political conflicts into violent ones and contribute to the militarization of society.

"Women are particularly affected by the wide availability and use of small arms both in times of war and in times of peace. It is a sad fact that women are increasingly participating as combatants in armed conflicts. However, statistics show that they remain the primary victims in such situations. Women's experience in armed conflicts are markedly different to those of men. Women are strategic targets due to their role as biological, cultural and social reproducers of their societies and are subject to gender-based violence at the hands of power wielded through a handgun or an AK-47. On the other hand, manufacturers of small arms are increasingly targeting women as potential buyers and users of small arms, capitalizing on their need for safety.

"The process of economic globalization, the ongoing systematic impoverishment of countries in the economically poor regions, and the erosion of human security not only facilitate small arms proliferation and diffusion, but also weaken the influence of the State adequately to control and regulate the supply and demand of small arms and light weapons. Economic disparities between and within countries are creating conditions in which weapons are considered the only solution to secure a livelihood. The demand for small arms is in this way directly and indirectly encouraged, especially in urban communities.

"In a momentous decision last year, the United Nations Security Council recognized the important role of women in the prevention, resolution, and management of conflicts, as well as in peace-building, when it adopted resolution 1325. Women are effective actors in peace negotiations and their contributions to achieve positive peace have been recognized on paper. It is imperative that all obstacles to the full participation of women at all levels and in all forums be removed.

"It seems to us equally imperative that the Conference on Disarmament resume its efforts speedily to achieve a comprehensive programme for disarmament.

"In conclusion, we wish you every success in moving disarmament forward and thank you for hearing us."

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank Mr. Petrovsky for reading out the message of the seminar, and I now give the floor to the coordinator of the Group of 21, the Ambassador of Morocco.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, on behalf of the delegations which are members of the Group of 21 - whom I have not actually consulted but I do not think that any of them would have any objection to these general remarks - I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, for reading out the message which was addressed to us by the group of women's non-governmental organizations working for peace and disarmament on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The Group on whose behalf I speak would like to thank these non-governmental organizations for the keen interest which they take in our work and to commend the invaluable contribution that they are making to the cause of peace and international security.

The Group of 21 is convinced that the commendable efforts of women to uphold the cause of general and complete disarmament is part of the worldwide commitment to ensure for all humankind a future of peace and security.

It is an honour for us to convey our sincere congratulations to all the women of the world on this day, celebrated in their honour.

(continued in English)

On a purely personal note, I would like to add - I cannot resist it - that I really think that we, the members of the Conference on Disarmament, are not really living up to the occasion, and I want to express my personal regret.

Mr. SALANDER (Sweden): It is my pleasure to extend, on behalf of the Western Group, a warm welcome to all representatives of non-governmental organizations with us today on International Women's Day. I would also like to thank the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the NGO Committee on the Status of Women for their coordination of the joint non-governmental organization statement just read out to us by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

We have listened with great interest to their views, and we share the disappointment expressed at the deadlock that persists in the Conference. The Western Group joins in the statement's call to the Conference speedily to adopt a work programme. The Conference must start work on FMCT, which it already long ago decided to do, and also needs to get work going on other agenda items. We also share the deep concern expressed regarding the human suffering caused by small arms and light weapons, and we salute the initiative to hold the seminar under the rubric "In the line of fire: A gender perspective on small arms proliferation, peace-building and conflict resolution". Non-governmental organizations and civil society are important partners, together with Governments, in the process before, during and after the International Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

(Mr. Salander, Sweden)

Mr. President, I would like to express the appreciation of my Group for the words of encouragement directed to the Conference in the joint statement. It is the common goal of both member delegations of the Conference on Disarmament and of the representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations present here today to promote disarmament and a culture of peace and understanding. The Western Group appreciates and encourages all efforts by non-governmental organizations and civil society to this effect.

Mr. PETŐCZ (Slovakia): Mr. President, it is my pleasure and honour on this occasion, on behalf of the Eastern European Group and on my own behalf as well, to express my warmest congratulations to all the ladies sitting in this room: to our colleagues, members of delegations, members of the Conference staff and also to our guests sitting in the gallery. I also thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, for reading out the message of the seminar of women's non-governmental organizations committed to peace and disarmament.

We pay tribute to all women engaged in the complex and difficult field of activity constituted by disarmament and arms control for their deep interest in and contribution to our work and their resolve to make our world safer. They are those who bear new life, they are those who are so much committed to protecting and preserving it. We pay tribute to ladies working in international women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, the media and other spheres of public life. We wish all of you good health, happiness and prosperity in both your personal life and public engagement.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, today is International Women's Day and it gives me great pleasure to extend, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, our best wishes and festive greetings to our women colleagues in all the missions and to all the women here with us in the public gallery, as well as to all the hard-working women staff in the Conference secretariat.

The Chinese delegation would also like to extend a welcome to the representatives of international women's organizations present today at the Conference and to thank them for their message, which amply demonstrates the interest shown by the international women's community in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and their support for that work.

The main theme of this year's International Women's Day is "Women and peace". The constructive role played by women all over the world constitutes an important and indispensable part of the efforts made by humankind in seeking lasting peace, common security and universal development. For a very long time women from all countries and various international women's organizations have been constantly active in the field of international arms limitation and disarmament, making their valuable contributions to the safeguarding of international peace and security. China supports their unremitting efforts in promoting international disarmament and maintaining world peace.

In conclusion, I would like to convey my congratulations to all women on International Women's Day. I wish them good health and happiness.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Mr. President, since this is the first time that I take the floor during your tenure, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of a prestigious but daunting task. My delegation will fully support your efforts to move the Conference forward to productive work. I would also like to welcome colleagues who have recently joined us in the Conference. I look forward to close cooperation with them.

I take the floor today to draw the attention of delegations to the meeting jointly organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the German Mission on the verification of a fissile material cut-off treaty that will take place this coming Wednesday, 14 March. All member and observer States have received the invitation to participate in this meeting.

More than two years have gone by since the Conference established, toward the end of its 1998 session, the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a cut-off treaty. Almost a year ago, all States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty agreed on the necessity of FMCT negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament. The NPT Review Conference urged the immediate commencement of such negotiations, with a view to concluding them within five years. Almost a year after that decision, FMCT negotiations have still not begun.

After the decision of 1998 we all believed that the Conference had, finally, achieved a breakthrough. Many preparations were made for the expected intensive FMCT negotiations in 1999. Capitals prepared their negotiating positions and considered strengthening their delegations to the Conference on Disarmament. In the first part of 1999 a number of activities took place in Geneva on the issue of FMCT, even though the immediate re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee remained elusive. Several seminars, workshops and expert meetings took place to prepare the ground for later, formal negotiations. However, these activities soon subsided as it became clear that the Conference on Disarmament remained in a situation of deadlock.

We have already lost almost a whole year of the negotiating time envisaged by the NPT Review Conference. From this regretful state of affairs we draw the following two conclusions.

First, we must intensify even further our efforts to attain a breakthrough and the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations in this Conference. The German delegation will do everything in its power to support you, Mr. President, and your successors in all efforts to that end.

Second, to avoid further loss of time we should resume active preparations for the negotiations to come. These negotiations will be complex and will have to address many very technical and highly political aspects. If we are to achieve the goal set by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, it is important that both capitals and delegations to the Conference on Disarmament should resume their preparatory work. We believe that a number of technical aspects can productively be discussed even before formal negotiations begin and without in any way prejudging the outcome of these negotiations.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

That is why Germany and UNIDIR have prepared the forthcoming meeting, which focuses on one specific aspect of an FMCT—its verification. We hope for a broad and active participation by all delegations.

Mr. MYA THAN (Myanmar): Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on the effective manner in which you have been conducting the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament and the intensive consultation with the view to reaching consensus on a programme of work. I applaud you for your dedication and tireless efforts. May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Christopher Westdal of Canada, for his invaluable contribution to the work of the Conference during his presidency. I also wish to welcome and convey warm felicitations to all the ladies attending this meeting and the non-governmental organization community representing women around the world, on this auspicious occasion of International Women's Day. I should also like to welcome to our midst Ambassador Eun-Yong Chung of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador Dr. Rajmah Hussain of Malaysia, who have just joined us in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, I have taken the floor to endorse fully your proposal to convene an informal plenary meeting following this regular plenary meeting of the Conference. I should like to offer some comments on the complementary activities you have referred to. While the work of the Conference on Disarmament is very important and very serious, we cannot be too serious all the time. So, in a situation like this, we would do well to take a fresh look at the problems we are facing in the Conference in a lighter vein and try to inject dynamism into this forum.

Mr. President, the successive presidents, including your good self, have done their utmost to overcome the current impasse in this forum and to reach agreement on a programme of work. Hard as we may try, it will take some time to achieve this. It is therefore only logical and appropriate that we engage in complementary activity, as you call it, and address important issues in informal plenary meetings. We should contribute to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and be helpful in facilitating our endeavours to reach agreement on a programme of work.

Surprisingly, some misgivings have been voiced in some quarters on the merit of such complementary actions. These misgivings are unwarranted. Member delegations should not be shy about expressing their views and addressing current important issues in the informal plenary meetings.

On this occasion of International Women's Day, it is fitting to borrow the analogy of a lady. The Conference on Disarmament is like a shy young lady. At times she is a bit too shy to say anything or to do anything. A lady never says "yes". When she says "no", it means "probably". When she says "probably", it means "yes". In this light, you should not be discouraged by some misgivings and reluctance of voices in some quarters.

(Mr. Mya Than, Myanmar)

I therefore encourage you, Mr. President, and the incoming presidents to go ahead with the complementary activities, despite some misgivings voiced in some quarters. You have proposed exactly what I also suggested in my statement on 15 February. What is in a name? Whatever we may call it, the most important thing is to make the optimal use of the plenary meetings of the Conference on Disarmament and engage in substantive work. Complementary activities will only help but will also not hamper our endeavours to agree on a programme of work and start real substantive work.

May I also tell you another story about a doctor. Once a doctor - a gynaecologist-obstetrician - was trying to deliver a baby. The mother was in great agony and unable to give birth. The doctor peeked in and examined and found out that there were two babies, not one. The mother was unable to give birth because the two babies were quarrelling with each other as to who should come out first. In fact, both should come out and the question of precedence should not be a problem. Once this problem was resolved, the babies were born naturally and without difficulty.

We should therefore be flexible about this matter. We should not be too fussy as to whether complementary activities should come first or the other way around. What is really important is to do substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament and to break the current impasse and to do what we are supposed to do in this negotiating forum.

Mr. President, my delegation fully supports your proposal to convene an informal meeting and we also encourage the incoming presidents to do the same. Let us get down to business in earnest.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): This is also the first time for me to speak, so I offer my congratulations and good wishes to you.

I take the floor only to comment very briefly on what the Ambassador of Myanmar has just said. Let me say that I really do appreciate the motivation and the seriousness of purpose of the Ambassador of Myanmar in making his intervention, and I do think as well that we are a club here and that there should be a collegial atmosphere. And there are indeed times when we should address each other with a light touch and with a sense of humour. Sometimes it can help to improve the atmosphere and to move things forward, and I do not think that I or indeed any of my women colleagues in the room would ever want to be thought of as lacking a sense of humour. But at the same time, I did feel compelled to say something about exactly how we exercise that sense of humour. I do think it is important to say on a day like today - and indeed any day - that when a woman says "probably", she is as likely to mean "probably" as a man, and when a woman says "no", she is as likely to mean "no" as a man. And I think when we exercise that "lightness of touch" that can often be so helpful to our discussions, we should be careful about the way in which we exercise it and the sensitivity that we exercise. As I say, I do always feel a little reluctant to ask for the floor on an occasion such as this because one does not want to be thought to react too heavily or inappropriately. But I hesitated and then decided, yes, I should ask for the floor because it is important to be clear on these points.

Mr. MYA THAN (Myanmar): I have taken the comments of the Ambassador of Ireland in good humour. As a matter of fact, I have a high regard for the women and ladies in this room and around the world. I should also like to tell you that in my country - Myanmar - the status of women is one of the highest in the world. So what I am trying to convey here is just the need to move forward the work of the Conference on Disarmament and I just incidentally mentioned some anecdotes to enliven the discussion.

Mr. CHUNG (Republic of Korea): Mr. President, I thank you for your warm and kind words of welcome. It is indeed a great privilege for me to represent my Government in this unique and prestigious negotiating body, and I am particularly glad that my first attendance at the Conference has coincided with the celebration of International Women's Day. The message delivered to this Conference today by the international women's community is certainly a fresh reminder of the important role this forum has played and is further required to play. As a new-comer, I look forward to working closely with all distinguished colleagues in this chamber, and for my part, I shall do my best to make due contributions to the Conference. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of the full cooperation of my delegation for your efforts to move the Conference forward and reach a consensus programme of work.

Ms. RAJMAH (Malaysia): Mr. President, thank you for welcoming me to this meeting today. This is my first meeting at the United Nations building in Geneva. I feel very honoured that my first presence at the Conference on Disarmament is on International Women's Day. I would also like to join other members in congratulating the women at the United Nations for their contribution to world peace and security.

As a new member of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like to pledge my cooperation and support for the work of the Conference in advancing the work of the meeting.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament, at the outset of my presidency, three long weeks ago - for it is remarkable how long three weeks can be and how packed the days that they contain - I expressed my intention to channel our work in a direction that serves the interests of all members of the Conference, including the observer States. I referred to our membership of the Group of 21, to certain foreign policy principles held by Chile and to our convictions with regard to the issues that we address in this forum. I also clarified, however, that we would talk less about such convictions in order to have an opportunity, in line with our aim of serving the interests of all, to hear the views of the Conference and to endeavour to configure our work in accordance with the circumstances in which we find ourselves today.

As I have already informed the groups and the various delegations which we have endeavoured to consult, both in traditional formats and in other, new formats, the conditions are not yet in place for us to agree on a programme of work for the Conference by consensus. Our consultations were based on the mandate conferred on us by the Conference itself: to continue to explore avenues on the basis of the so-called Amorim proposal, contained in document CD/1624.

(The President)

One of the driving forces behind this exercise has been the desire to preserve the political status of this proposal, which we see not merely as one more document, but rather as a capital asset, resulting from a process which has been under way for at least two years. The Amorim proposal is the outcome of the efforts of various presidents, who have tried out and tested different formulae with a view to achieving convergence between the different positions within the Conference. These presidents include Ambassadors Rodriguez Cedeño, Dembri, Kreid and Lint. It is in this sense that this proposal is an asset, a heritage, which we must safeguard for the good of the Conference itself. Most of you have heard my analysis of the current situation, an analysis imposing no requirement to adopt the Amorim proposal as it stands, there being no agreement to amend the operative part of the Amorim proposal, which would be the second scenario. Nor has there been any progress on the idea of opening up the presidential declaration, so that we can make use in it of that constructive ambiguity about which we have spoken. In other words, taking the three scenarios providing the context for my own presidency, there are some in which we believe that we have gone backwards, our positions have hardened, and others in which either no progress has been made or the signals which have been given have not been sufficiently ambiguous to enable us to continue working on them with any measure of optimism.

Now, this does not mean that there is no way out. Clearly, what is at stake here, as I have already said at several of the consultations which I have held with you, are different approaches to the handling of time, given the external conditions - what Ambassador Westdal has called the dynamic context. Some delegations are of the view that the Conference can wait, and that it should wait for developments outside the Conference to proceed. There are delegations which are impatient and disquieted about the situation of the Conference, and there are others still who have already declared it dead and who evidently approach their own consultations with a certain measure of tedium, since they feel that they are merely performing an almost meaningless ritual.

I do not myself share any of these positions, but, after three weeks in which I have liaised with almost all members of the Conference, I have the following feelings. Our consultations, which were undertaken with a view to rendering service and listening, have enabled us to establish that, within the Conference, there is a sizeable groundswell of opinion whose adherents, above all, want a programme of work but who, at the same time, are anxious to identify the various ways in which this programme can be moved forward and who therefore believe that the programme of work may be put together in different ways.

You will all agree that the Conference on Disarmament is, primarily, a negotiating forum. This point has been unanimously repeated by all delegations. We also share this view. To many delegations, however, the fact that the Conference is a negotiating body does not preclude it from also developing complementary actions to contribute to this negotiation. We have been very careful in saying that complementary actions are not a substitute for the main effort and, in that way, we have taken great care to ensure that the Conference may not discuss any "plans B" - namely, plans providing alternatives to its main function, which is to come up with a programme of work. It is my belief, however, that the time has now come for us to decide how to proceed with our efforts to come up with a programme of work based on our capital asset, the Amorim

(The President)

proposal. I deemed it my duty to consult the Conference on this and this is also what I intend to do subsequently, in open-ended informal consultations. I would be extremely grateful for your participation in these consultations. We shall reconvene for that purpose in this room in 10 minutes.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 15 March 2001, at 10 a.m. The informal consultations are for member States and observers only.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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15 March 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 March 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Juan Enrique Vega (Chile)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 870th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

May I begin by bidding farewell to the Ambassador of Hungary, who will shortly be leaving to take on the functions of Director of the Division for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy in the UNESCO secretariat. Ambassador Joó has represented his country in the Conference on Disarmament since June 2000 and has performed his responsibilities with devotion and diplomatic skill. I am sure that you will wish to join me in conveying to him and to his family our very best wishes for the future. I remember that Ambassador Joó was received here on the same day that I joined as representative of Chile. We are linked by that particular circumstance. Others will recall him for what he says in his farewell statement.

Ambassador Joó, you have the floor.

Mr. JOÓ (Hungary): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure to see you assume the important office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. At the outset, let me congratulate you on the creative manner in which you have conducted our proceedings. I would also like to express the appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, Mr. Christopher Westdal, for his tireless efforts to bring our deliberations closer to consensus. I wish also to pay respect to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey. Let me also express the gratitude of my delegation to all the secretariat staff for the assistance they unfailingly provide to the work of the conference. Also, I cordially welcome those colleagues who have recently joined us and wish them every success in their work.

Today the Conference on Disarmament is concluding its second month of deliberations in the 2001 session without being able to adopt a programme of work. Although we know that progress has been made under the successive presidencies as a result of collective efforts, the advance gained so far clearly has not been sufficient to make a breakthrough in our work: we are still unable to start genuine negotiations. This is a deplorable situation, Mr. President, whatever the explanation of its fundamental causes can be. My delegation fully shares the view expressed in your introductory statement, that the current stalemate cannot continue indefinitely without damaging the credibility of this body.

Among several useful proposals, document CD/1624 has indicated a possible way out of the impasse, in outlining the composite nature of a future agreement. Like many of the delegations in this chamber, we continue to see the Amorim text as a sound basis for the resumption of the substantive work of the Conference.

My delegation has also aligned itself with the statement of the European Union presidency, which, exactly one month ago, confirmed: "Three undertakings - the immediate launch of the FMCT negotiations, as well as dealing with both nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space within subsidiary bodies whose mandates shall need to be both pragmatic and substantial in order to be accepted by all - taken together, constitute the basis today for an agreement upon which we can begin our work."

(Mr. Joó, Hungary)

The resumption of FMCT negotiations continues to be a high priority for Hungary. Our standpoint was clearly stated during the NPT Review Conference and repeated at the last session of the First Committee in New York. A fissile material cut-off treaty is of critical importance to disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. The urgent need to commence negotiations was also confirmed by the Final Document of the NPT Conference. Therefore, the start of these negotiations should be the next step. Hungary supports all practical suggestions and initiatives which can move the cause of the cut-off treaty in the right direction. For this reason, we welcomed wholeheartedly the seminar on the verification of a fissile material cut-off treaty held yesterday in this building at the joint initiative of the German delegation and UNIDIR.

Hungary is committed to multilateral security arrangements. It therefore strongly supports the conduct of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, maintaining the unique role of this forum in international diplomacy today. In the same spirit, we attach great importance to other non-proliferation and arms-control negotiations which take place outside the Conference on Disarmament.

At this point, let me make a few observations concerning the activities of the Ad Hoc Group negotiating a protocol to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Since Hungary chairs the Ad Hoc Group, our special commitment to bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion needs no detailed explanation. Our assessment is that significant progress has been made towards reaching this objective. The results achieved so far are encouraging and lead us to believe that the Group is in a good position to complete the negotiations in a time-frame enabling it to submit the draft protocol for adoption relatively soon. This can be done at a special conference to be held prior to the Fifth Review Conference in November-December this year. We call upon States Parties to redouble their efforts to implement the relevant decisions of the Fourth Review Conference and make the political decisions necessary for it. Against the background of the stalemate in other multilateral disarmament forums, including the Conference on Disarmament, the adoption of the protocol would gain even greater significance by demonstrating the determination of the international community to counter the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

My country remains interested in engaging with other States to counter the humanitarian difficulties caused by anti-personnel landmines. Last year Hungary co-chaired the Standing Committee of Experts on Stockpile Destruction, set up to carry out the provisions of the Ottawa Convention. The support and the interest we received during the Standing Committee meetings encouraged us to widen and further develop the international programme of stockpile destruction. It was in that spirit that, last February, the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada, organized a regional expert seminar in Budapest. The topic of the seminar was the destruction of the so-called "butterfly mines", developed in the former Soviet Union, and stockpiled in many countries of the region. Based on our experiences, we believe that global initiatives in respect of anti-personnel mines can best be implemented by securing cooperation at the regional level. For this reason, we continue to be committed to various regional efforts.

(Mr. Joó, Hungary)

The uncontrolled proliferation and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons fuel regional conflicts in which civilians are increasingly the victims of violence. Illicit and irresponsible transfers, in the region of conflict in Europe, entail increased danger to the neighbouring countries as well as to the civilian populations living there. Large-scale and uncontrolled arms availability hinders the post-conflict recovery of States, slows down the process of stabilization and multiplies the cost of every peace settlement.

Hungary favours effective and widely acceptable measures to prevent destabilizing flows of small weapons. We believe that concerted efforts are needed to develop norms, guidelines and practical measures covering all aspects of this issue. These include, among others, improvement of national controls on the traceability of small arms, increased transparency, reinforced export control mechanisms and enhanced cooperation among national agencies at regional and wider international levels. In order to make the current system more effective we favour regionally focused approaches based on universally accepted principles.

The negotiations on the issues I have just mentioned are held outside the Conference on Disarmament. The challenges at those forums are also enormous and the international community is still awaiting their accomplishment. This fact obviously does not reduce the Conference's own responsibility, as the sole standing negotiation forum on disarmament. On the contrary, substantive progress in any of the negotiations mentioned above could even make more evident the imperative need to moving this Conference out of its current deadlock.

We do not think that the Conference on Disarmament lacks good ideas and proposals about the way ahead. What we really need is the political determination to implement them. At this point, let me reiterate our willingness to support all initiatives which are able to bring the Conference closer to consensus. I would also like to pledge the continuous cooperation of my delegation with all efforts aimed at the commencement of a genuine dialogue in the Conference.

(continued in French)

Mr. President, I have asked for the floor not merely to confirm Hungary's position on questions related to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, but also to take leave of this distinguished house. Very soon I shall be taking up new responsibilities as an international official at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Before leaving my position as Ambassador, I would like to extend my thanks to delegations represented here in the Conference for their cooperation and the excellent relations we have been able to develop, despite the brevity of my appointment here in Geneva.

In conclusion, Mr. President, allow me to recall here a personal memory. Shortly after our accreditation here in Geneva as new ambassadors, you and I met by chance, following a reception which was held somewhere in the Palais. We were both looking for the way out of this building, roaming through corridors with which we were as yet unfamiliar. As far as I recall, after a little hesitation, we managed to find the right way out of the building, which at that time was like a real labyrinth to us.

(Mr. Joó, Hungary)

Needless to say, finding a way out of the vicious circle in which the Conference on Disarmament has been stuck for so many years now is an incomparably more complex task. Nevertheless, and despite a series of disappointments, many delegations believe that there must exist a way out of the labyrinth. As I take leave of the Conference, I sincerely hope that, for its own sake, this forum will find the way out as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I also remember that occasion, how we became acquainted when we were lost. I do not know whether we are still lost here but we shall endeavour to find a way out. I wish every success to you and your family in your new duties. Our colleagues here in the Conference will, I am sure, all share those wishes.

The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of France, Ambassador de La Fortelle.

Mr. de LA FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament which was held on 8 February my colleague and friend Ambassador Christian Faessler announced the holding of a Franco-Swiss seminary on the traceability of small arms and light weapons, covering the issues of tracing, marking and registration.

As many delegates know, since they took part in that event, the seminar was held here in Geneva on 12 and 13 March 2001. About 200 representatives of more than 90 States were present. The event was also attended by representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations, technical experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Ambassador Dos Santos, chair of the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, which will be held in New York in July 2001, also took active part in the seminar.

The discussion covered technical aspects relating to the tracing, marking and registering of small arms and light weapons and also dealt with the more legal and political approach which could lead to the negotiation of an international agreement in this area. A chair's summary has been made available to participating delegations. We would like to request that the text be published as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament and distributed to all States members of the Conference and to non-member States participating in its work.

I would not like to finish this short statement without wishing our Hungarian colleague, Ambassador Joó, professional fulfilment in his high-level position at UNESCO and also - and above all - much personal happiness during his stay in Paris.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): In the absence of any other requests for the floor from delegations and since this is the last session which I shall be chairing in the Conference, I believe that the time has come to offer a summary and draw some conclusions from our term of office as President of the Conference.

The first thing that I would like to say is that I am not disappointed either with the work performed over this period or with the results achieved. While we still do not have a programme

(The President)

of work - which is indeed regrettable - we have demonstrated that the Conference is a body of great vitality. It is a storehouse of experience in the cause of world disarmament. It cannot and must not be allowed to go to waste. For this same reason there is a justifiable sense of frustration about the time which has not been properly used.

The Chilean presidency based its work on the mandate to be found in paragraph 36 of the 2000 report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly, which entrusts presidents Dragonov and Westdal with the task of continuing intensive consultations based on the so-called Amorim proposal found in document CD/1624. This mandate, which derived from specific consultations conducted with groups in the Conference and with China, has been extended until the task is completed or the Conference decides otherwise.

This is of great importance because, as we have indicated in our consultations, it reflects the progress made over a period of at least two years. The Amorim proposal, which we should really call the "Amorim process", is a result of the efforts of various presidents, who have tested various formulas to achieve rapprochement within the Conference. These include Ambassadors Rodriguez Cedeño, Dembri, Kreid and Lint.

Notwithstanding the difficulties which we can see today as a result of the international political situation and the tendency towards unilateralism displayed by some of the main players, in the view of the majority of the members of the Conference the Amorim proposal remains valid as the basis for efforts to achieve approval of a programme of work.

The Amorim process is a valuable legacy which we must safeguard in the interests of the Conference itself. If we had to start this process again from scratch, after a few months we would probably come up with a very similar concept. Many delegations have drawn attention to the significant progress implicit in the general willingness to establish, for the first time after a period of 30 years, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We share that view and, consequently, one of our principal objectives has been to preserve the political and legal status of the Amorim proposal, so that it may continue to form the basis for presidential consultations.

Based on that mandate our presidency - which encompasses not merely the president but also the members of the Chilean mission - conducted intensive consultations using various formats, such as bilateral consultations and working meetings with groups in the Conference and with their coordinators, and also applying new cross-cutting ideas reflecting emerging tendencies. The consultations have encompassed virtually all members of the Conference, with the exception of a few delegations which, while requested to participate, were unable to attend.

We wish to engage in an exercise in transparency. We have consulted and studied the problem directly with the Conference. We have shared with you our ideas on possible alternatives, applying a degree of that candour which we believe is occasionally necessary in diplomatic work.

The consultations by the Chilean presidency were conducted on the basis of three analytical scenarios. The first was acceptance of the Amorim package as set forth in

(The President)

document CD/1624. The consultations established that this first scenario remains unlikely, given the diverging positions of various actors who continue to be separated by as yet unbridgeable gaps. Barring unforeseeable events outside the Conference, we do not believe that this scenario can be brought to reality in the short term.

The second scenario involves amending the text of the draft decision found in document CD/1624, with a view to incorporating more explicitly the requirements of a number of the Conference's member States in paragraphs 1 and 3. These refer respectively to the mandate for the ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament and PAROS. Our consultations suggest that this approach, which was explored to a certain extent by Ambassador Westdal during his term of office and complemented by a New Zealand proposal put forward in the first session of informal open-ended consultations held this year, is also unlikely to lead to consensus. Meeting the requirements set by some would only widen the gap between them and others.

The third scenario would be to recast the draft presidential declaration found in document CD/1624 in such a way as to strengthen the nature and the ultimate negotiating thrust of all the mandates contained in the draft decision. This approach, which employs the idea of an interpretative presidential declaration for that purpose, could, in our view, lead to approval of a programme of work, so long as all the players involved agree to engage in an exercise of "constructive ambiguity". Following this approach would mean setting the Conference on Disarmament as our prime objective and require us to set aside considerations of precise language.

Our consultations suggest that there is some glimmer of hope in this approach. It might even be possible, as a step towards dislodging the Conference from its present stalemate, to consider having a presidential statement that, independently of the Amorim proposal, refers to certain principle elements, such as reaffirmation that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral forum for the negotiation of universal disarmament instruments and that all matters coming before the Conference may be subject to negotiation. It could also emphasize that the subsidiary bodies and their mandates should help open paths for the commencement of negotiations.

Our successors will have to continue exploring this possibility. We leave these ideas for further consideration.

Our consultations suggest in addition that, within the Conference on Disarmament, there is an important school of thought whose adherents wish to take advantage of its time and resources until consensus is reached on a programme of work. All the members of the Conference whom we have consulted consider that our first task is to achieve a programme of work and to get down to substantive work. They all agree that the Conference on Disarmament is primarily a forum for negotiation. We wholeheartedly share both views.

To many delegations, however, these defining factors do not exclude the performance of what - from the outset - we have preferred to call "complementary activities". These possible

(The President)

actions we continue to understand as complementary to the principal effort and not as a substitute for that effort. That is why we have avoided referring to a "plan B", which, merely by its vivid title, might lead to the mistaken belief that its content is being put forward as an alternative to the quest for a programme of work. We are of the view that there should be no such alternative.

To discuss the question of "complementary activities" informal open-ended consultations were convened during the third week of this presidency. In the resulting debate we were able to identify at least four proposals or ideas which, in our view, have sufficient interest and potential to warrant further exploration.

First of these is the proposal by Myanmar to conduct a structured debate, within the framework of our plenary meetings, on the substantive items of the adopted agenda. This proposal has been formulated and circulated in writing which obviates the need for further comments by us at this stage.

After this, Germany proposed revising the agenda, which has been with us without extensive amendments for 20 years now and which contains no reference to certain important issues which, although they could lie within the purview of the Conference on Disarmament, are dealt with outside this forum. Germany also considered the appointment of special coordinators, pursuant to decision CD/1036, to explore and foster consensus on one substantive issue and their appointment, *ipso facto*, presupposes the absence of such consensus. Their appointment should also not be linked to an overall consensus on the programme of work. Germany also believes that it might be appropriate to reactivate the special coordinators for the reform of the Conference on Disarmament.

For its part, Italy suggests that the presidencies should continue holding intensive consultations on the three most extensive and complex items: nuclear disarmament, FMCT and PAROS, and that, in the meantime, we should begin complementary activities on other matters, such as negative security assurances, transparency in armaments, landmines and possible reforms to the Conference on Disarmament, which in their view seem to be less contentious. But, as the Italian delegation itself acknowledged in its statement last Thursday, these are not entirely free of controversy. This is a kind "piccolo" programme package.

Finally, Mexico has drawn our attention to the various possibilities offered by the Conference's own rules of procedure. Articles 19 and 23 are drafted in very flexible terms and would provide for all kinds of informal consultations, with or without experts, the establishment of a great range of subsidiary bodies, including subcommittees, technical groups and expert groups, offering wide scope for our imagination.

We have listened very carefully to the various reactions to all these proposals and ideas, which offer further evidence of the creative capital to be found in the Conference on Disarmament. Nevertheless, we are convinced that it would be premature to draw conclusions today from last Thursday's debate. The ideas which we have briefly referred to in this presentation offer prospects for action and merit further study and consultations.

(The President)

We have also heard the suggestion that it might be useful to appoint a special coordinator specifically to address the question of complementary actions. This is an idea which we would also leave open for consideration by those who will continue the search for a way out of the present deadlock. Many have referred to the need to modernize our procedures. Certain aspects of this issue are covered by the report which was coordinated by my predecessor, Ambassador Illanes, on an earlier occasion.

Last of all, I would like to say a number of things, speaking in my capacity as representative of Chile. The present situation calls for a certain measure of optimism. We should understand that an invaluable effort is being made here to keep the door open for dialogue and reflection among member countries. A wealth of experience and specific technical knowledge has also been generated in the process.

These capacities are only waiting for the necessary "critical mass" to be attained, which, depending on international political events, would render them sufficiently powerful to come into play and, ultimately, to enable the Conference on Disarmament to begin its negotiating activities.

We should bear in mind that each successive presidency and each successive year represent contributions to the disarmament process and to international security and, therefore, to world peace. An important factor in this regard is the continuity inherent in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

We would like to emphasize that we firmly believe in the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral forum of prime importance for world security. This conviction leads us to reaffirm the need to persevere in our endeavours to break its stalemate.

When we observe in some of those among us what we might describe as a sense of defeatism or disenchantment, which is leading some to pronounce the Conference dead, we cannot help feeling that if the Conference on Disarmament did not exist we would be hard at work to establish it.

At another level, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament is a body which should be made more democratic. This is not the time to dwell on that issue but we will work in due course to achieve that goal.

When we commenced our term of office we observed that we would not be taking on our shoulders responsibilities which did not belong to us. To achieve consensus on a programme of work is a task shared by all the members of the Conference and not that of the President alone, who, in the best of all possible worlds, can serve only as a facilitator and articulator of ideas in the search for consensus.

Nevertheless, this collective responsibility is not evenly apportioned among us all. I cannot and I should not fail to state my conviction that the States which have opted for nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrents have a greater responsibility for shifting the Conference out of

(The President)

its stalemate. We would like to see them shoulder that responsibility. The security interests of States are legitimate but in no event should they be placed above international collective security.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for having had the opportunity to exercise this responsibility. At no point have I regretted it. On the contrary, it has been an experience that will remain with me always. I would also like to express my thanks to the Conference secretariat, to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Petrovsky, to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Román-Morey, to Mr. Jerzy Zaleski and to all members of the office, who have cooperated so effectively and so selflessly. We also extend our appreciation to the interpreters and the conference room staff.

Now, a special word for the members of the missions, ambassadors and colleagues with whom we have interacted here. It has been a great pleasure to work with you. Thank you for your encouragement and respect.

I must also make particular mention of the members of the Chilean Mission. They have all played essential roles in the performance of this work. I pay my respects to Ambassador Raimundo González, Minister-Counsellor Alfredo Labbé and Counsellors Waldemar Coutts and Rodrigo Espinoza. Thank you for your devotion, imagination and patience with me. Special mention also goes to Marcos Sánchez, who has had to struggle with the difficulties that I have with all the languages of the world, including my own.

Thank you very much.

It only remains for me now to wish my successor in the presidency, Ambassador Hu of China, every success in his term of office. He may count on our full cooperation.

In addition, I would like to announce that, in yesterday's presidential consultations, it was agreed to change the date of the plenary meeting of Thursday, 29 March, to Tuesday, 27 March, in view of activities being conducted on the initiative of the Swiss and Netherlands Governments which will involve a large number of the members of the Conference.

That concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 22 March 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.871
22 March 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 22 March 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Hu Xiaodi

(China)

GE.01-61024 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 871st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before going into the substitutive arrangements for today, allow me to make a few opening remarks as the President of the Conference.

At the outset, I would like to express my deep appreciation of and gratitude to my predecessors. They spared no efforts in consulting with delegations and gathering opinions as widely as possible in order to reach consensus on the programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament. In order to maintain a delicate balance, they weighed every word and sentence and, in the interest of finding a compromise, they laboured over their choice of options, strategies and timing. Unfortunately, even if blue roses may blossom thanks to the wonder of genetic engineering, the Conference on Disarmament is still deadlocked on its programme of work. This does not detract one iota, however, from the wisdom, tenacity, competence and dedication that previous presidents have demonstrated during their arduous terms of office. Here I am particularly grateful to my predecessor, distinguished Ambassador Juan Enrique Vega Patri for his invaluable advice and useful suggestions.

Furthermore, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General of our Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, our Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, and the entire staff of the secretariat, for all the help and support which they render to me.

Starting this week, the rotating presidency of the Conference falls on China. As China's ambassador for disarmament affairs, I feel greatly honoured to assume this post, but at the same time I am aware of the heavy responsibilities that it entails.

It is known to all that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole global multilateral negotiating forum on international arms control and disarmament. In its membership, it encompasses nearly all the politically and militarily influential States; in mandate, it deals with the weighty issues of international peace and security; in achievements, it can count the conclusion of the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. As for its potential, the Conference, drawing on the support and inspired by the great expectations of the international community, can bring together experts on arms control and disarmament from all over the world to negotiate highly complicated disarmament treaties.

Needless to say, the Conference on Disarmament faces a difficult situation - its past glories cannot make up for its current lack of progress; for all its large membership, it is accomplishing little; the international community has high hopes but the Conference remains paralysed. This cannot but cause worry and concern.

(The President)

How can the Conference regain its past glory? People have explored and devised various options, including a reform of procedure, to clear the way for the Conference on Disarmament to resume substantive work. At the same time, many have examined in depth why the Conference has been deadlocked for so long. I have no intention here to elaborate on the big topic of the "fundamental reasons for the present deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament".

As I recall, in his farewell speech last September, our former Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, made a few thought-provoking remarks when he said: "Multilateral disarmament forums have always evolved over the years in response to changed political realities. The Conference on Disarmament is no exception in this respect, and the difficulties it now faces are not due to what is perceived by some as the rigidity of its rules of procedure, of its working methods and the group system. They are rather a reflection of the complexity and the dynamics of contemporary international relations, and therefore all efforts should focus on the creation of a political climate conducive to the full use of the Conference as a negotiating forum, in particular on the restoration of a minimum harmony among the major players."

"The situation is more powerful than individual efforts". This may be an appropriate summary of Mr. Bensmail's remarks. The Conference on Disarmament handles the important topics of arms control and disarmament, which have a bearing on international peace and security and are closely related to the overall international security situation and the security of each country. Empty talk of arms control and disarmament in isolation from the international security situation is nothing more than an attempt to build castles in the air. Similarly, efforts to tackle arms control and disarmament without coming to grips with the important issues influencing the overall situation or without considering individual countries' fundamental security concerns are like streams without sources or trees without roots. This is an exercise devoid of meaning.

Where, then, is the Conference on Disarmament heading? From the President's vantage point, I cannot offer a clear answer. Arms control and disarmament efforts are at a crossroads. The direction of the Conference on Disarmament is determined not by any individual, nor by any country or group of countries. It depends upon the joint efforts of the whole international community, all States and all delegations.

As I assume the presidency, what I wish to convey to you is neither a sense of pessimism, which may make you lose confidence, nor a sense of euphoria which may disappoint you later. In seeking consultations and cooperation with all delegations to advance the work of the Conference, I shall be guided by the principles of fairness, impartiality and openness.

I would now like to turn to some considerations of our plan of work and seek your responses.

(The President)

Essentially, the duties of the President are defined in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, paragraphs 29, 34 and 42 are also relevant. Besides, can paragraph 5 (d) of document CD/1036 be put into practice? And how? This still remains a question.

I intend to build upon the work done by my predecessor, distinguished Ambassador Vega, who in his statement last Thursday outlined three scenarios regarding the question of our "programme of work" and four proposals or assumptions about "complementary actions". That is a sound description of the present situation.

I intend to continue exploring these three scenarios and four proposals, to see if there is within them something on which everybody can agree, that is to say, to find that precious "consensus". Of course, during the process, any new ideas and proposals, additions or specific steps related to the seven options will be welcome.

I wish to explore the "programme of work" and "complementary actions" in parallel without giving priority to one or the other. The reason is that my term of office covers the last two weeks of March and the two weeks in mid to late May. It seems inappropriate mechanically to assign the first period to the "programme of work" and, even if no progress is made, to proceed in May to a discussion of the "complementary actions".

As for the "programme of work", the Conference on Disarmament recognizes "the support of the Conference for CD/1624 as a basis for further intensified consultations". This position is still shared by all in the Conference. In this regard, the picture seems to be quite clear: most delegations either agree with or go along with all the options, while a few delegations are either strongly opposed to one or the other option, or accept no "consensus" on any of them. I will see if the situation remains the same, if there are any changes or if any new options can be envisaged.

Regarding the "complementary actions", the situation is more confused. Some ideas have been put forward but we have also heard some opposing views. But are these "opposing views" actually a case of everybody agreeing and one party holding out? Do they mean that no negotiated agreement can emerge? These are questions that I shall be putting to every delegation. At the same time I shall see whether there are any further additions to, or moves to give effect to, the existing four "complementary actions", and whether there are any new proposals besides them.

During my term of office, I shall conduct wide consultations with delegations, listen to their opinions and convey to them the ideas and proposals of other delegations. I shall naturally attach great importance to exchanges of views with the three group coordinators, because they represent the positions and views of their respective groups. I hope all delegations and groups will take the initiative in putting forward ideas, solutions and proposals and join me in holding consultations between countries and groups in a common effort to further the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

(The President)

During my consultations, I shall state the position of China as and when appropriate. In so doing, I will do my best to distinguish clearly between when I am speaking as the President of the Conference and when I am stating China's position. I shall seek to avoid confusion.

I shall be circumspect about submitting "proposals by the President". Most probably I shall make specific proposals as the President only when there apparently exists a "basis for consensus". One consideration is to avoid playing a "misplaced role", at least this is my view for the time being.

Distinguished colleagues, we can only proceed with our work in accordance with the principle of consensus contained in rule 18 of our rules of procedure. I am looking forward to close collaboration with all delegations and shall count on your understanding, cooperation and support. Our objective is to work together to make progress in the Conference on Disarmament, which is so valuable to us.

Thank you.

Distinguished colleagues, I have only one speaker inscribed on my list for today's plenary meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Sidorov.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this crucial stage in its operation. I wish you every success and assure you of my delegation's readiness for constructive cooperation.

Since this is my first statement during this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament, I would like also to welcome our new colleagues who have joined us in our work.

The issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space has been for many years and remains one of the top priorities for Russian diplomacy. I wish to recall that our country has repeatedly taken initiatives in this field. The best-known among them are the proposals advanced in the early 1980s concerning the conclusion of one treaty prohibiting the deployment in outer space of any kind of weapons and another banning the use of force in outer space and from space against the Earth.

In his address at the Millennium Summit in the United Nations on 6 September 2000, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, stated: "Particularly alarming are plans for the militarization of outer space. In the spring of 2001 we shall be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the first manned flight to outer space. That man was our compatriot and we are suggesting that on that date, under the auspices of the United Nations, an international conference on the prevention of the militarization of outer space be organized. I think that the most appropriate venue will be Moscow".

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

Comprehensive preparations are currently being made for such a conference, which is designed to serve the twofold purpose of addressing both the issue of preventing the introduction of weapons into outer space and the prospects for the peaceful uses of outer space. These goals are also reflected in the forum's logo "Weapons-free outer space - the arena for peaceful cooperation in the twenty-first century".

The conference is scheduled to conduct its work over four days from 11 to 14 April 2001. Three of these days will be devoted to meetings and one will feature a tour of memorable places associated with Yuri Gagarin and of the Russian space-related scientific and industrial organizations. The conference will be held in the format of several symposia. One of these will be specifically dedicated to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as addressed in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

Representatives of national space agencies, foreign and defence ministries, academies of science, leading outer-space-related scientific and research centres, commercial and industrial companies, international and non-governmental outer space organizations, universities, scientific and education centres, insurance companies and banks engaged in outer-space-related activities, and also cosmonauts and astronauts have been invited to attend the forum.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to us to be able to announce today that the international community is demonstrating considerable interest in the Moscow conference. More than 40 countries and international organizations, with the United Nations in pride of place, have already officially confirmed their participation. The countries will be represented at the level of heads or deputy heads of national space agencies, deputy ministers for foreign affairs or senior officials of the ministries of foreign affairs or other government departments. A large number of representatives from non-governmental organizations and the academic community are also planning to take an active part in the Moscow forum.

In view of the marked interest shown in the forthcoming Moscow conference by delegations to the Conference on Disarmament, we have prepared a brief information note about the forum and will be distributing it as an annex to this statement.

Mr. President, in pursuing its initiative to convene an international conference on the non-militarization of outer space, Russia has of course taken into account that human activities in outer space may have various different objectives.

On the one hand, these may be aimed at creating what we might call a climate of trust and predictability and ensuring control over the compliance with international agreements in the area of arms reductions, through the launching by military agencies of outer space monitoring, communications and navigation systems. In the long run such activities would lead to the strengthening of international security.

On the other hand, there is a real threat of the possible creation and deployment of military outer space systems which would undermine global strategic stability.

(Mr. Sidorov, Russian Federation)

Russia would like to draw the attention of the international community to this issue so that, by our joint efforts, we can avert these dangerous developments. We share the view that the elaboration right now of specific measure to prevent an arms race in outer space would help to obviate the enormous expense entailed by having to disarm it in the future. We believe that the speedy elaboration of an international legal regime prohibiting the deployment in outer space of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction, should become one of the principal undertakings of the international community.

Russia's initiative is universal in nature. It is not targeted against the interests of any State. We proceed from the premise that the contemporary norms of outer space law contain "blank spots" and do not ensure a comprehensive and effective ban on an arms race in outer space. They limit only certain - albeit important - types of military activities of States, particularly those related to the testing and launching into outer space of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction.

In Russia's view, one approach that might be explored would be to exclude, on a clearly defined legal basis, the stationing of any type of weapons in outer space, to renounce the use or threat of the use of force in outer space, from outer space or towards outer space and to prevent an arms race in outer space and, even worse, its degeneration into a battlefield. We are convinced, however, that such work on outer space issues should not result in the creation of obstacles to the peaceful exploration of outer space.

Given that the forthcoming conference is being timed to coincide with the anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's flight, considerable attention will be paid to the issues of the peaceful use of outer space and international - including commercial - cooperation in its exploration as a real alternative to the militarization of outer space. Accordingly, three of the four symposia scheduled to take place within the framework of the conference will be devoted to the issues of a peaceful outer space, including piloted outer space activities, outer space ecology, the use of outer space resources for the purposes of sustainable development and outer space education.

This international conference on the prevention of an arms race in outer space should, as proposed by Russia, be neither a negotiating exercise nor an academic occasion. We would like it to take the format of a "brainstorming session", in which participants can recount the results of the exploration of outer space, describe new projects, exchange views and hold discussion. We are ready for such a dialogue. We would be glad to hear and support any suggestions from partners aimed at strengthening strategic stability and at further mutually beneficial cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space.

We hope that each country will be able to find topics of interest to it in the agenda of the Moscow conference.

Thank you for your attention.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

Distinguished colleagues, I wish to inform you that the secretariat has received a note verbale from the Permanent Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stating that, owing to the increasing workload and shortage of staff in the Mission, it has decided not to take on the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament for the period from 20 August to 31 December 2001. Accordingly, I have requested the secretariat to approach the next country on the list of members of the Conference, to ascertain whether it would be prepared to assume the presidency for this period. I will keep you all duly informed of the results of these consultations.

This concludes our business for today.

As you may recall, at the plenary meeting last week the then President informed the Conference that, following the request of the ambassadors of the Netherlands and Switzerland and after consultations with the group coordinators, the plenary meeting originally scheduled for 29 March had been cancelled. Accordingly, the next and the last plenary meeting for this part of the session will be held on Tuesday, 27 March 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.872
27 March 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 27 March 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Hu Xiaodi

(China)

GE.01-61067 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 872nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Egypt and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I give the floor first to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Fayza Aboulnaga.

Ms. ABOULNAGA (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Conference and I am confident that your effective guidance will help the Conference to start its substantive work, after a long period of inaction, if not in the first part of this year's session then early in its second part. I would like on this occasion to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Egypt and to offer my best wishes for success in your difficult task.

I would also like to thank your predecessors, Ambassadors Christopher Westdal of Canada and Ambassador Juan Enrique Vega of Chile, for their energetic and creative presidencies and, as this is the first time that I take the floor before the Conference officially since their arrival, extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues Ambassadors Eui-Yong Chung of the Republic of Korea, Samir al-Nima of Iraq, Amina Mohamed of Kenya and Rajmah Hussein of Malaysia. The arrival of two new ladies in our midst will help to remedy the Conference's current gender imbalance. I would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to welcome the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Enrique Román-Morey, I would also like to thank the members of the Secretariat for their dedication to the work of the Conference.

Mr. President, I cannot but express my delegation's profound misgivings over the state of paralysis that the Conference on Disarmament has been suffering from for at least two full sessions. At a time when the peoples of the world yearn for effective steps in each and every area of the disarmament agenda, our Conference is still unable even to agree upon its programme of work. It has been argued that the present situation of the Conference on Disarmament merely reflects the state of international relations. But it was precisely in this same state of international relations that the 2000 NPT Review Conference managed to achieve historical success based upon an ambitious programme for the total elimination of nuclear weapons with both international and regional dimensions.

The unequivocal and unconditional undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal had been universally hailed as a long awaited announcement of their intention to comply with their unambiguous legal obligations under article 6 of the NPT. It is a step that came in response to the appeal of billions of people around the world, to the message delivered loud and clear by non-governmental organizations, and to the voice of reason reflected in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice

(Ms. Abounaga, Egypt)

which unambiguously declared that there exists an international obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

So, at last, the nuclear-weapon States have made a commitment. This step should not be underestimated. However, promises are meant to be kept. The billions of our people in every continent have no use for empty words. The call in the Final Document of the sixth NPT Review Conference for the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament can only be interpreted in the light of this unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States. Reason dictates that it is now time to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate on nuclear disarmament with the objective of eliminating every nuclear weapon in the world.

A number of proposals have been tabled at previous sessions for the mandate of such an ad hoc committee and successive presidents of the Conference, the Group of 21, and a number of delegations have tabled specific drafts. Egypt has also submitted a number of proposals for a possible mandate for this ad hoc committee, the most recent of which was included in document CD/1563 dated 26 January 1999. Nevertheless, we have consistently demonstrated great flexibility in responding constructively to the various proposals in this regard, most recently by accepting the proposal by Ambassador Amorim, the then President of the Conference on Disarmament, contained in CD/1624, as a basis for consultations on the programme of work. But flexibility must be reciprocated. What is essential is that effective progress be achieved. The cause of nuclear disarmament is too important to be relegated to the domain of lip service.

It is impossible to deny our profound disappointment that the commitments made in the NPT Review Conference are yet to be translated into specific actions. It is, however, a sign of some progress that there is consensus in the Conference on Disarmament, for the first time, that nuclear disarmament should be dealt with in an ad hoc committee with a substantive mandate.

Egypt believes that such an ad hoc committee should deal with specific measures and practical steps for nuclear disarmament, including those called for in the Final Document of the sixth NPT Review Conference. It should also deal with the various aspects of a prospective legal regime for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including the verification aspects central to such a regime.

In parallel with our efforts to address nuclear disarmament within the Conference on Disarmament, we should redouble our efforts in the wider international context. In addition to the numerous resolutions adopted by international and regional organizations, President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak has called for an international conference to rid the world of nuclear weapons. This call has been adopted in different forms by different international forums. It was taken up by Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his call for an international conference on eliminating nuclear dangers, a call that was also adopted by the Millennium Summit, the largest assembly of heads of State and Government in history.

(Ms. Abounaga, Egypt)

In view of the current impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament is quickly becoming a matter of the utmost urgency.

Egypt considers transparency with regard to weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons and their related technologies, an important confidence-building measure. At the fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions of the First Committee of the General Assembly, Egypt introduced a draft resolution on transparency in armaments, which was adopted by the Assembly in both sessions, in order to highlight the need for a parallel approach that would make transparency comprehensive in all fields of armaments. We felt no need to reintroduce this resolution at the fifty-fifth session, since the approach that it espoused has been firmly established.

We therefore welcome consideration of the different aspects of transparency in armaments during the 2001 session of the Conference on Disarmament, including the establishment of an ad hoc committee on this subject, which would naturally have a comprehensive mandate. While Egypt lays strong emphasis on the goal of nuclear disarmament at the global level, we are especially alarmed at the current situation in the Middle East, which requires immediate action. In this regard, the initiative adopted by Egypt and Iran since 1974 to establish a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East and the initiative of President Mubarak to create a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the region have received the overwhelming support of the international community. This was reflected in countless resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and other international and regional forums. The Final Document of the sixth NPT Review Conference was unambiguous in reaffirming "the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East".

In view of the above and in the light of General Assembly resolution 55/36, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", which was adopted by an overwhelming majority, and resolution 55/30, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", which was adopted without a vote, the delegation of Egypt requests UNIDIR to prepare a study on practical steps for the immediate creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as an action-oriented follow-up to the study that the Institute prepared in 1996 on the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region and also building upon other work previously undertaken by UNIDIR in this regard.

Egypt's support for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", to conduct negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile materials for weapons or other explosive devices falls within the context of a programme of work which includes all the major issues of the agenda. In this regard, the establishment of this ad hoc committee under item 1 of the agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", firmly indicates that the objectives of the desired treaty are not limited to non-proliferation aims but include substantive nuclear disarmament objectives as well.

(Ms. Abounaga, Egypt)

For such a convention to achieve its goals, it should include substantive and practical measures for nuclear disarmament. Its scope should therefore include all fissile materials potentially usable in the manufacturing of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices across the world, including military stocks. Any international instrument arrived at must be non-discriminatory; in other words a unified regime for strict international verification must be applied to all States and to all facilities capable of producing fissile materials, with no exception.

Such a treaty must also be internationally and effectively verifiable. This means that the international instrument to be negotiated must be based upon the element of absolute transparency which, of course, implies that all facilities that are involved around the world in the process of production or storage of the fissile materials must be subject to a strict regime of supervision and verification. In short, the entire nuclear fuel cycle must be placed under such an international regime. It will also be essential to create or develop a foolproof regime to spot any undeclared nuclear installations or undeclared stocks of fissile materials.

Any potential treaty or convention to prohibit the production of fissile materials cannot imply any degree of international *de jure* or *de facto* recognition or acceptance for the possession of nuclear weapons by any State not party to the NPT or for the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the five nuclear-weapon States specified in the NPT. Such a treaty should not in any way give the impression that there is international acceptance of such possession.

On the contrary, the international legal instrument to be negotiated should unambiguously and clearly call upon all States to join the NPT. It should also underscore the necessity of the achievement of the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons, as stipulated in article VI of the NPT treaty, within a predictable time-frame.

The value of such a treaty depends on its early entry into force. Egypt was among the first States to call for the announcement of a collective commitment or a series of unilateral voluntary commitments by all States which operate nuclear facilities to implement an immediate moratorium on the production of all weapons-grade fissile materials. This call has gained widespread international support, since such a step would positively influence the coming negotiations and demonstrate the earnest commitment of all the parties concerned to the substance of these negotiations.

General Assembly resolution 55/32, which is one of a series of resolutions presented by Egypt every year in rotation with Sri Lanka in the First Committee, calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective. This resolution also invites the Conference on Disarmament to complete the examination and updating of the mandate of the ad hoc committee on the subject and to re-establish it as early as possible during the 2001 session. This is clearly with a view to conducting negotiations for the conclusion of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

(Ms. Abounaga, Egypt)

In this regard, we believe that there is a need to build upon the extensive work already undertaken in the Conference on Disarmament in previous years and speedily move towards the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate this issue. What is required is to prevent a costly and destructive arms race before it starts. If we do not succeed in acting with determination now, we will stand helplessly in the face of dangerous technological developments with the potential to introduce new military paradigms, and thereby pose a serious threat to the security and stability of all societies. Egypt therefore supports the commencement of negotiations as soon as possible on a comprehensive regime to prevent the use of outer space for all military purposes. Outer space should be used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Mr. President, while supporting your efforts to reach an agreement on the programme of work, I would like to emphasize the importance of the other important elements in such a programme, namely negative security assurances, transparency in armaments and anti-personnel landmines. I need not repeat here our positions on these issues as they are adequately recorded in the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is also important to note that the substantive work of the Conference is still held behind closed doors in an anachronistic manner to a large extent lacking in the transparency that we demand in all other forums. We should therefore not neglect the three important substantive organizational aspects that will ultimately help to improve the performance of this Conference, namely, the expansion of membership, a review of the agenda and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament.

Within this context, the active participation of civil society has now become a sign of our times. The Conference on Disarmament may be one of the last forums in the world in which a limited number of delegations still resist any role for civil society and non-governmental organizations. In fact, non-governmental organizations have the potential to help in reviving the work of the Conference in more ways than one. I therefore emphasize that the voice of non-governmental organizations should be heard in the plenary meetings of the Conference on Disarmament. This is, in our opinion, a key element in improving the functioning of the Conference and rendering it more effective.

Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Egypt's total commitment to work earnestly and diligently towards the achievement of the objectives of general and complete disarmament, which require maintenance of the minimum defence requirements and the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, in accordance with the priorities adopted by the international community at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978.

Finally, I would like to express our sincere hope that the Conference on Disarmament in its 2001 session will live up to its responsibilities as the sole multilateral forum for global disarmament negotiations. I need only recall in this regard the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the opening of this 2001 session conveyed to us by Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, in which he reminded us that the representative membership of this body puts it in the unique and privileged position of negotiating outcomes that could be truly

(Ms. Aboulnaga, Egypt)

universally adhered to and effectively implemented. The delegation of Egypt sincerely hopes that we possess the collective wisdom needed to take advantage of the rapidly narrowing window of opportunity that is still available to us, given the present international strategic situation, before this opportunity vanishes for a long time to come.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of Egypt for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Ian Donaldson.

Mr. DONALDSON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, let me begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. The delegation of the United Kingdom offers you its full support and cooperation in your work.

I have asked for the floor today very briefly to inform the Conference that on 27 February 2001 the United Kingdom ratified Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Pelindaba, the treaty which established an African nuclear-weapon-free zone. The United Kingdom's decision to ratify the Protocols to the Treaty clearly demonstrates our support for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. It underlines our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and our wish to see a world free of all weapons of mass destruction.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

At this point, I would like to make a brief statement in my capacity as President.

Today's is the last plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament during the first part of the 2001 session and is also my second plenary meeting as President. After this week the Conference will enter a six-week mid-session break. It is my intention today to undertake a brief review of matters of relevance that have occurred over this part of the session and, at the same time, to report to you all on the consultations that I have had with all parties since becoming President.

As you all know, the Conference has been at an impasse for some time now, being unable to arrive at consensus on its programme of work, and everyone is displeased and anxious. To break the deadlock, my predecessors, in particular Ambassadors Westdal and Vega, strove tirelessly and explored boldly; the zeal and diplomatic wisdom which they displayed are manifest to all. Although they were unable to attain the consensus on the programme of work which we have so long sought, a number of options that may advance the cause of the Conference have emerged thanks to their efforts and the joint efforts of all delegations.

Since becoming President one week ago, I have held consultations on the Conference's programme of work and related questions with all the group coordinators and with colleagues from a dozen or so delegations, based on the work done by my predecessors and the principle of fairness, impartiality and openness.

(The President)

The consultations have shown that, on the matter of the work programme, the basic points of divergence persist and are essentially reflected in the mandate as regards the important issues - namely, should it negotiate on these matters, should it pursue negotiations as an end in themselves or should it discuss these matters? The divergent views on this question and the deadlock are undoubtedly related to the prevailing international security situation and differing strategic considerations. In this regard, it is the common understanding of all sides that the Conference on Disarmament recognizes the support for document CD/1624 as a basis for further intensified consultations and efforts are continuing to find possible solutions.

With regard to complementary actions, my consultations have also revealed notable divergences of opinion. According to some, based on the Conference's rules of procedure and document CD/1036, there are a number of courses of action that may be explored. According to others, consensus on the choice of any complementary action is still a long way off in view of a number of basic considerations. Nevertheless, appropriate efforts are also continuing in this regard.

Distinguished colleagues, as your President, I shall continue to cooperate sincerely with all sides, as I stated at our plenary meeting last Thursday, objectively reflecting and transmitting everybody's positions and suggestions. I would like to reiterate my hope here that every delegation and group will constructively put forward ideas, devise different methods and propose suggestions, consulting widely both with me and among the various countries and groups in a collective effort to promote the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

I shall be in Geneva during the first, fourth, fifth and sixth weeks of the mid-session period; for the second and third weeks, I shall be in New York to attend the UNDC meeting. I shall stay in touch with all parties so as to gather their opinions and reactions in preparation for the opening of the second part of our session.

Distinguished colleagues, this concludes our business for today and, therefore, the last plenary meeting of the first part of the 2001 session. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 17 May 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.873
17 May 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 17 May 2001, at 10.15 a.m.

President:

Mr. Hu Xiaodi

(China)

GE.01-62136 (E) 010601 060601

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 873rd plenary meeting and the second part of the 2001 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I would like to welcome new colleagues who, since we adjourned in March, have joined our Conference as representatives of their Governments: Ambassador Khasbazaryn Bekhbat from Mongolia, Ambassador Toufiq Ali of Bangladesh and Ambassador Gustavo Albin of Mexico. We look forward to working together with them in pursuit of our common goals.

Esteemed colleagues, on our list of speakers for today's meeting we have the representatives of Turkey, Japan, Belgium and France. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Turkey, Ambassador Murat Sungar.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, since this is my first opportunity to address the plenary under your presidency, I wish to extend our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency. I also assure you, Sir, of the continued cooperation of my delegation.

I have asked for the floor on behalf of my delegation as well as the delegation of Greece. I therefore wish to make a joint statement on behalf of the two delegations.

I am pleased to be able to inform the Conference on Disarmament of a recent step taken jointly by Turkey and Greece in respect of adherence to the Ottawa Convention. The information has already been conveyed in a letter dated 19 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, issued and circulated as an official document of the Conference (CD/1643 of 30 April 2001), which contains a declaration of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcoming the joint statement of Turkey and Greece regarding the intention concurrently to become parties to the Ottawa Convention.

During the visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece to Turkey last month, the two ministers of foreign affairs made a joint statement on 6 April 2001, in which they emphasized the desirability of the adherence of all States to the Ottawa Convention and announced their decision concurrently to become parties to the Convention. The text of the joint statement reads as follows:

"Turkey and Greece, conscious of the human sufferings and casualties caused by irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, welcome the measures taken over the years unilaterally, bilaterally and multilaterally, aiming at prohibiting, restricting or suspending the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of the said mines and express their determination to do their utmost to contribute to these efforts. They also recognize that a total ban on these mines is an important confidence-building measure that would contribute to security and stability in the region.

"With these considerations in mind, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Ismail Cem, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. George Papandreou, have emphasized the desirability of the adherence of

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

all States to the Convention on Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, namely, the Ottawa Convention. In this context, they have decided concurrently to start the procedures that will make both sides parties to the Ottawa Convention. For this purpose, while Greece initiates the ratification process, Turkey will start accession procedures. It is also agreed that the instruments of ratification by Greece and accession by Turkey will be simultaneously deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in due course."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair and I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Japan, Ambassador Noboru.

Mr. NOBORU (Japan): Like the previous speaker, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of this very important post, and we pledge the full support and closest possible cooperation of our delegation.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Conference on Disarmament that a workshop on a treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices was held in Geneva this Monday and Tuesday, 14 and 15 May 2001, co-hosted by the Governments of Japan and Australia. This workshop attracted broad-based participation and greatly benefited from the contributions of IAEA as well as several well-informed private research institutes.

This workshop was intended to contribute to deepening the participants' knowledge and expertise on the treaty issues and to developing their views on those issues as part of preparations for when negotiations start in the Conference on Disarmament.

The workshop was composed of three sessions, which were moderated by our three distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Luck of Australia, Mr. Kurihara of the Nuclear Material Control Centre of Japan, and Dr. Patricia Lewis of UNIDIR. A total of 13 panellists from a wide range of countries contributed to the discussions, and also more than 100 people participated as the audience and joined very actively in the question-and-answer sessions.

Now I would like to share some of my personal observations which I, as Chair of this workshop, believe relevant to the work in the Conference on Disarmament. The points I will now make, therefore, should not be construed as convergent views of the participants or anything of this sort.

First, the participants had an interesting exchange of views in the first session on the significance of the FMCT as well as general obligations of States parties under the treaty. Strong interest in the FMCT negotiations was demonstrated by the participants. I felt that the participants shared a strong sense of urgency regarding agreement on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament which includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on FMCT.

(Mr. Noboru, Japan)

The question of general obligations is fundamental to the treaty. Many participants have shown strong interest in whether the treaty should deal only with future production or deal with stockpiles as well. Some specific ideas were suggested as to how to deal with this question. I must say, however, that views are still divided on this issue. In order to find a solution to this basic question and in order not to make this issue a possible impediment to the start-up phase of the negotiations, we definitely need to show maximum flexibility and to look at the key concepts contained in the agreed negotiating mandate, the so-called Shannon mandate, from the long-term historical perspective of both arms control and disarmament.

Second, with regard to the verification issues which were discussed in the second session, the participants engaged in useful discussions building on past workshops, including the recent German-UNIDIR seminar held in March. One basic issue here concerns the scope of verification, namely, whether it should be a focused approach, a somehow expanded focused approach or a comprehensive approach. The key concepts in the agreed mandate would again be very relevant to this question, and a practical and balanced solution should eventually be found.

It was widely pointed out during the discussions in this session that several problems, technical as well as political, need to be carefully considered to make the verification system credible. They include the scope of declaration, the question of undeclared facilities, methods for accounting and the relevance of the IAEA verification system, to name a few. Since those problems seem to require very detailed analysis and consideration, continuous discussions by experts with a high level of expertise and sufficient knowledge are required. From this viewpoint the discussions among the panellists were found stimulating and provided a good basis for future work. The participation of more experts from a broader range of countries is suggested to further develop discussions in future.

In the third session, the participants first addressed the possible structure of the treaty, including the treaty-implementing organization and the entry into force of the treaty. This discussion provided them with a clearer picture of what the negotiations should aim at. With regard to the issue of the organization, a question was raised whether IAEA could be used or whether a new organization, which might be called "FMCTO", should be created. All these issues are important, although they can be appropriately addressed at a later stage.

Finally, the participants also discussed what the next steps should be in the process to commence the negotiations in the near future. It seems to me that the possible next steps presented by two panellists, to prepare for the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, were both interesting and merit further consideration by us here in the Conference. It is my hope that any further exercise of this kind will have universal attendance. It is my intention to compile all the papers presented in the workshop and make them available to those interested in this issue for reference in their continuing endeavours to prepare for the commencement of the negotiations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Belgium, Ambassador Lint.

Mr. LINT (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all, may I congratulate you on your accession to the position of President of the Conference on Disarmament. We wish to assure you that you may count on the full cooperation of Belgium in your endeavours to bring the Conference out of its current impasse.

I was very gratified to hear the statement of our Turkish colleague, which was significant both in terms of promoting good relations between Greece and Turkey and in the broader context of the universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines.

As of today, 114 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention and 140 States have signed, ratified or acceded to it. A further two States members of the Conference on Disarmament have completed the national ratification procedures and will soon be depositing their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all States which are not yet parties to the Convention to ratify it or to accede to it at the earliest possible date.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of France, Ambassador de La Fortelle.

Mr. de La FORTELLE (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, in my turn, I would like to convey to you my congratulations and my best wishes for success in your presidency.

I have asked for the floor today in order, very briefly, to draw the attention of member delegations and observers in the Conference on Disarmament to the note dated 3 May 2001 which we have circulated in their pigeon-holes. In this note we inform them that the French mission to the Conference on Disarmament has launched a new Internet site, with the domain name www.delegfrance-cd-geneve.org. This site provides a brief presentation of the activities carried out by the French authorities in the area of security and disarmament, followed by their positions on certain security and disarmament issues. The Web site includes statements organized by institution and by topic. These statements relate to activities in which the French mission is particularly involved.

To judge by initial statistics of visits to this site, already numbering several hundred, it seems that it will serve as a useful facility both for delegations and the research community.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the representative of France for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage? As that seems not to be the case, distinguished colleagues, before concluding our work for today, allow me, in my capacity as President, to take this opportunity to report in general on the consultations I have had with all delegations since the closure of the first part of our session and to give a brief indication of the next step that we should take.

At the very beginning of my term of office I indicated that, as President, I would be guided by the principles of fairness, impartiality and openness in seeking consultations and cooperation with all delegations to advance the work of the Conference.

Up to now, I have exchanged views with more than 30 delegations on the situation which the Conference currently faces and on ways of breaking the deadlock. Because of time constraints and other commitments of various parties, I have not yet been able to hold consultations with all colleagues. Naturally, I remain ready to listen to the ideas and suggestions of all parties.

On the basis of the relevant consultations, I wish to summarize for you a number of inconclusive views or sentiments.

First, all sides have manifested their concern and dissatisfaction with regard to the current plight of the Conference and expressed their strong hopes that the Conference will break the deadlock and commence substantive work at an early date.

Second, many delegations are much concerned about the developments in the field of international security and strategic stability since the conclusion of the first part of our session, as they will to a greater or lesser extent, or in one way or another, continue to exert an influence on what the Conference needs to do and whether or not it is able to begin its work.

Third, on the matter of the programme of work, all sides still agree on using document CD/1624 as a basis for further intensified consultations. The "Amorim proposal" is an option and there are also several other proposals suggesting amendments to it. As for these proposals, most delegations either agree with or go along with all of them, while there are a few differing views, which either firmly agree with a given option and are strongly opposed to another, or vice versa, thus making it impossible to achieve consensus.

Fourth, with regard to the next step to take, some delegations advocate that intensified consultations continue to be held on the main contentious issues relating to the programme of work, in order to seek a compromise that will be acceptable to all. Some other delegations suggest that more attention should be devoted to exploring relevant proposals or suggestions related to the complementary actions during the present "waiting period".

(The President)

Fifth, during the previous period, a great number of considerations, ideas and even specific proposals were expressed on both the programme of work and the complementary actions. Up to now, however, no delegation has formally requested me as President to seek comments from all sides on any specific proposal.

It seems that some ideas are still at the stage of deliberation and exploration, before being ready for formal submission to the Conference for action.

Distinguished colleagues, in view of the circumstances mentioned above, I will as President, within my term of office and on the basis of the work that has already been done, continue consultations with all sides and listen attentively to their ideas and suggestions, with a view to helping the Conference move forward in its work.

Notwithstanding the unfavourable overall situation and numerous difficult factors facing us, I hope that in this new, second part of our session we will all be able to find new ways of thinking and new positions, thus opening a new phase in our work.

I also wish to express my appreciation to all delegations for their readiness to hold consultations with me and for their cooperation in our joint effort to move the Conference forward.

Distinguished colleagues, with regard to our working arrangements for next week, as you are all aware, next Thursday, 24 May 2001, is an official holiday of the United Nations and the Palais des Nations will be closed. Following the established practice in such cases, the Conference's plenary meeting should be held on Tuesday instead. It so happens, however, that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Luvsangin Erdenechuluun, will be visiting Geneva from 23 to 25 May and has expressed the wish to address the Conference on Disarmament on Wednesday, which falls on 23 May 2001.

Following my consultations with various parties, members of the Conference have agreed to hold the next plenary meeting on Wednesday, 23 May 2001.

I would now like to give the floor to the distinguished representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Bekhbat.

Mr. BEKHBAT (Mongolia) (translated from French): Mr. President and dear colleagues, I thank you most warmly for your kind wishes and warm words of welcome.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my satisfaction and pleasure at being posted to Geneva and being able thus to work together with you in pursuit of the goals set before the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Bekhbat, Mongolia)

For me this is a particularly happy occasion and a fortunate coincidence, since my Minister for Foreign Affairs has expressed the wish, during his visit to Europe, to address the Conference on Disarmament and to set forth the positions of the Mongolian Government on all the current issues in the field of disarmament.

I thank all those delegations who supported this proposal and agreed to receive the Minister on 23 May - although this is the eve of a public holiday - thus affording the Minister the chance once again to demonstrate the interest shown in Ulaanbaatar for this eminent multilateral negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank Ambassador Bekhbat for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair and, on my own behalf, I extend my welcome to him once again.

Distinguished colleagues, that concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Wednesday, 23 May 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.874
23 May 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 23 May 2001, at 10.20 a.m.

President:

Mr. Hu Xiaodi

(China)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I declare open the 874th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of us all, a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency, Mr. Luvsangin Erdenechuluun, who will be addressing the Conference today. His presence among us today demonstrates the abiding commitment of the Government of Mongolia to our common endeavours and the importance that the Government and, personally, the Foreign Minister attach to this forum.

It also gives me great pleasure cordially to welcome the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, who is attending our plenary meeting today. I am certain that the Conference joins me in conveying to him our appreciation for his steadfast interest in the work of this single multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community.

I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Luvsangin Erdenechuluun, to address the Conference.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia): Mr. President, it is a distinct honour and privilege and, indeed, a pleasure for me to be amongst the disarmament colleagues and share with you Mongolia's perception and views on some key issues related to international security, arms limitation and disarmament.

I am pleased that I am making a statement at the plenary meeting presided over by a distinguished representative of the People's Republic of China, a friendly country with which Mongolia enjoys close and good-neighbourly relations.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my warm greetings to my good friend and colleague, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and express my appreciation of his valuable work as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. I am also very happy to see the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, here today.

This year is special for the Mongolian people as it marks the eightieth anniversary of the people's revolution and the fortieth anniversary of our membership in the United Nations. I mention these events not solely because of their historical significance for my people, but also because of their relevance and role in shaping my country's foreign policy. One of its priorities has always been the strengthening of international peace and security and promotion of the disarmament process with a view to attaining the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament.

But as the world enters the new century and, indeed, the new millennium, does it find itself closer to that collective goal? Has the international community succeeded in making the global disarmament process a sustainable one? And do we live now in a world less or more safe? There are, I am afraid, no simple answers to these questions. As we review progress in the

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

area of arms limitation, disarmament and non-proliferation, our reaction can at best be termed as mixed. While there has been certain movement forward in some areas, there has been little or no progress in others.

In its Final Document the 2000 NPT Review Conference included a number of agreed conclusions and recommendations related to nuclear disarmament. For the first time ever all the nuclear-weapon States made "an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to total nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under article VI". The Conference also agreed on the necessity of establishing in the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament. It called for the immediate establishment of such a body. The Conference also called for further efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally and for further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons based on unilateral initiatives as an integral part of the nuclear disarmament process. A call has been made for the engagement as soon as appropriate, of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenal. These constitute an important statement of purpose and, if translated into practice, will open the way to practical nuclear disarmament measures.

With respect to strategic arms reductions, Mongolia underlines the importance of an early entry into force of the CTBT and START II treaties. We also look forward to further practical steps leading to substantial and meaningful reductions in nuclear arsenals within the START III process and other multilateral negotiations with the involvement of the other nuclear-weapon States.

In the context of the CTBT, Mongolia looks forward to the upcoming Conference to be held this fall in New York to facilitate the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The importance of its earliest possible entry into force becomes even more compelling in the light of the activities that could seriously undermine the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The credibility of the CTBT and other international instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of their verification regime. We welcome the efforts aimed at ensuring the reliable operation of the existing control and monitoring systems under the CTBT and the CWC convention and undertaking measures to improve the verification mechanism of the BWC.

The growing emphasis placed of late on nuclear weapons in military doctrines is a cause of increasing concern. It is, therefore, only natural that countries like Mongolia favour the adoption of such steps as the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles, joint undertakings by the nuclear-weapon Powers of a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. These are essential safety measures that would reduce the risk of the unauthorized or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons. In addition, provision should be made for legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States - parties to the NPT - as has become customary for nuclear-weapon States in signing protocols to nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. In this context, Mongolia welcomed the proposal by the

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

Secretary-General to convene a major international conference aimed at identifying ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. We hope that this timely proposal will be given serious consideration by the international community with a view to determining its optimal scope and timing.

My delegation also believes that it is important for the Conference on Disarmament to engage in earnest negotiations on the early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile materials cut-off treaty. Pending the negotiation of that treaty we would welcome a moratorium by the nuclear-weapon States on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials and for greater transparency through disclosure of their present stocks. Better still, we would urge the United Nations to establish a register for all stocks of weapons-grade fissile materials. This would help establish an important balance with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mongolia emphasizes the vital importance of preserving the spirit of the ABM Treaty, a cornerstone of strategic stability, the validity of which has not lessened over the years. Bearing in mind the fact that undermining the treaty could trigger an uncontrollable nuclear-arms race, Mongolia welcomed last year the decision by the United States to postpone the deployment of a national missile defence system. The recent United States proposals for a new defence policy, including the establishment of missile defences, in our view, would inevitably impact upon global security and strategic stability. While welcoming the readiness of the United States Administration to consult with others regarding their plans to deploy a national missile defence system, Mongolia believes that such consultations should fully take into account broader security implications of these plans, the increasing concern of States over the dangers of militarization of outer space and the necessity of preserving global strategic stability.

Mongolia shares the legitimate concern of the world community over the global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are the principal instruments of death wherever conflicts and wars occur. We hope that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled for this summer, will result in practical measures designed to tighten control, curb their spread and destroy surplus weapons.

Well over a decade after the demise of the cold war the world has been witnessing a new surge in defence spending accompanied by a booming new business in arms exports, disturbing signs of a shift in military doctrines and priorities. This, in our view, increasingly underlines the urgent need to agree on objectives, agenda and timing for convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It could assess both the achievements and setbacks experienced over the past years in global disarmament efforts and chart a new vision in the early years of the new century towards the further reduction and elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the reduction and elimination of some categories of conventional weapons.

Mongolia strongly advocates the consolidation of existing and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, which serve as an important component of nuclear non-proliferation

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

with a positive impact on regional security and stability. We believe that the principles and guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission in 1999, will play a significant role in that regard.

In 1992 Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone in a move that was widely supported by the international community. Since then we have come a long way. As a follow-up to its declaration the Parliament of Mongolia adopted in February 2000 a law on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status thus institutionalizing it at the national level. At its fifty-third and fifty-fifth sessions, the General Assembly adopted resolutions on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. At the last session of the General Assembly the five permanent members of the Security Council made a joint statement providing security assurances to Mongolia in connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status. We consider it an important step along the road to institutionalizing that status at the international level. In this context we believe that it is imperative to start negotiations on legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States within the Conference on Disarmament.

Last but not least, I wish to emphasize the vital role played over the years by the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament issues, in concluding a series of multilateral arms limitation and disarmament treaties. It is of crucial importance now to break the ongoing deadlock that has gripped the Conference on Disarmament over the last few years, through a display of the necessary political will and redoubling of our joint efforts to reinvigorate the work of this unique forum. In this regard, Mongolia considers the Amorim proposal contained in document CD/1624, as a sound basis for further consultations. We appreciate the efforts being undertaken by you, Mr. President, to this effect and wish you every success in this endeavour.

Mongolia stands committed to the promotion of international peace and security and attaining the shared goal of general and complete disarmament through the concerted efforts of all nations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Chinese): I thank the distinguished Foreign Minister of Mongolia for his important statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor?

As that does not seem to be the case, I would like to make a concluding statement, as the term of my presidency draws to its close.

Within the Conference on Disarmament there is a fairly widespread view that the entire international situation and security environment with which we are confronted is unfavourable for the Conference on Disarmament. In reality, the main focus of attention is whether the ABM Treaty is to be preserved and strengthened as a cornerstone of strategic stability, as stated in the Final Act of the 2000 NPT Conference, or whether we must move beyond the constraints of the 30-year-old ABM Treaty.

(The President)

The answer to this question will have an extensive and profound effect on international security and strategic stability: to a very large degree, it will also affect the Conference on Disarmament, since the Conference, as the sole global multilateral negotiating forum in the field of arms control and disarmament, is bound to be affected by aspects of international strategic stability and the security of all countries.

During my four weeks as President and in the inter-sessional period, I have held consultations with colleagues from 40 different delegations. To date, there has been no delegation which has requested me as President to seek comments from any side on any specific proposal. Meanwhile, all delegations have manifested their deep concern at the Conference's inability to move forward and expressed their strong hope that consensus can be reached as soon as possible on the programme of work.

In this regard, just like last week, today I still have no "breakthrough" on which to report to you all. All that I can do is to convey the following points to you:

First, "the Amorim formula remains a basis for further intensified consultations towards reaching agreement on the programme of work" - this remains everyone's common understanding. To date, I have not heard anyone say that we should withdraw from this position. It would seem that this is the only bright spot in the current difficult period that we are experiencing.

Second, with regard to our "programme of work", we remain unable to achieve consensus. The relevant divergent views can be summed up in various ways. I would describe the situation as follows: one school of thought holds that negotiations on an FMCT should be commenced. At the same time, issues relating to nuclear disarmament and PAROS can also be discussed. There is another school of thought which maintains that, at the same time as negotiating on an FMCT, PAROS should also be negotiated, or we should at least indicate that it is such negotiation which is our goal. At the same time, with regard to the wording of the "nuclear disarmament" mandate in the Amorim proposal, a few amendments have been suggested.

It remains my impression that most delegations would have no difficulty at all in accepting either of the two approaches. That said, the above-mentioned divergences remain profound. They are related to developments in the overall security and strategic stability situation and are the cause of the continuing inability to reach consensus on the programme of work.

Third, with regard to the so-called "complementary measures", these are still being explored. In general, because of aspects of the programme of work or, to be more precise, because of the deadlock surrounding the three major issues, which remains difficult to break, people appear to have demonstrated a growing interest in the possibility of adopting complementary measures during this "waiting period". At present, however, we still do not have any plan for "complementary measures" which would be capable of enjoying consensus

(The President)

agreement, yet neither do we have any grounds to assert that we are unable to achieve consensus on any complementary measure, or that we are still very far from consensus in this regard.

Distinguished colleagues, in view of the foregoing, I would like to propose to my successor as President, distinguished Ambassador Reyes, the following:

First, to preserve the common understanding on "recognizing the support of the Conference for CD/1624 as a basis for further intensified consultations";

Second, taking this common understanding as our basis, to continue exploring ways of achieving consensus on the entire programme of work, including the three main issues. In this regard, every suggestion must be closely studied;

Third, at the same time, in the face of the current difficult situation, to use the "waiting period" idea for the continued exploration of the possibility of a more speedy adoption of any "complementary measures".

I hope that everyone is able to work together in this direction.

Finally, I express my heartfelt thanks to all delegations and to all colleagues for the cooperation and the assistance that they have given me. During my presidency, the Secretary-General of our Conference, His Excellency Mr. Petrovsky, the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Román-Morey, all colleagues in the secretariat, and the entire staff of the Conference, all provided me with every possible assistance and support, and I wish to convey my most sincere thanks to them all.

At this stage, it only remains for me to wish my successor in this function, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodríguez of Colombia, all the best in his endeavours and to assure him of my readiness to assist him in his tasks.

Dear colleagues, this concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting will be held on Thursday, 31 May 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.875
31 May 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 31 May 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Camilo Reyes Rodriguez (Colombia)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I call to order the 875th plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament. There is no speaker on the list for this morning's plenary. I would like, however, to make an initial statement, as Colombia is now taking over the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

Distinguished ambassadors, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen: this is the first time that it has fallen to my country to preside over the Conference on Disarmament. May I first of all reiterate Colombia's deep commitment to the Conference - a forum which, over the years, has demonstrated its invaluable relevance, thanks to the negotiation and conclusion of some of the most important international instruments in the field of disarmament. Multilateralism has always held pride of place in Colombia's foreign policy, which is why my country has actively participated in the latest arms control and disarmament negotiations. Among these I would like to highlight the Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, adopted in the framework of the Organization of American States, the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and the preparatory process for the NPT Review Conference.

Special mention should also be made of our commitment to the issue of small arms. As you will recall, in 1988, Colombia submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-third session resolution 43/751, the first to be adopted by the United Nations on the issue of the illicit traffic in arms. Subsequently, Colombia submitted to the General Assembly an initiative to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects and the proposal was adopted by resolution 43/36 H of 6 December 1991. Seven years later, with the adoption of resolution 53/77 E, the General Assembly decided to hold this conference during the course of the current year, bearing in mind the views of Member States and the recommendations of the group of governmental experts on small arms, as stated in the Secretary-General's report on the subject.

For the last two years and more I have witnessed the patience, creativity and diligence with which my predecessors have sought a solution to the current stalemate in the Conference and I would therefore like today to pay special tribute to the efforts of Ambassadors Westdal, Vega and Hu, who have presided over the Conference this year, and to all other participants in this long and laborious process, who have worked on defining elements which could help provide a formula for future agreement on a programme of work.

The Ambassador of China, my immediate predecessor in this honourable but increasingly difficult task, when summing up the results of the consultations that had been conducted during his mandate, recommended to me a line of action with which I fully concur and which will therefore determine the direction that I will follow in my own endeavours, as, with your cooperation, I strive to maintain the pre-eminence of the Conference of Disarmament as the sole international negotiating forum in the field of arms control and disarmament.

It is the common understanding of all members of the Conference that the proposal submitted by Ambassador Amorim, which is to be found in document CD/1624, is a valuable asset for the Conference and constitutes a basis for further intensified consultations and for the continued exploration of possible avenues to agreement on a programme of work. Bearing in

(The President)

mind what I have just said and that it is also our common understanding that the primary obligation of the Conference is to agree on a programme of work, I will focus most of my consultations on exploring variations on the Amorim proposal which might lead to consensus.

In his conclusions, Ambassador Hu introduced the idea that the Conference is in a "waiting period", in view of the complex international situation and the deterioration of the security environment. Yet a "waiting period" does not necessarily entail paralysis or total inactivity. A waiting period may and should mean that, while awaiting a change in international circumstances which will make possible progress in the conference's substantive activities, we should continue to seek agreement on a programme of work and also forge ahead with work on those issues which have general support among members of the Conference. This would mean that, without diminishing our interest in reaching an agreement on the programme of work, the Conference on Disarmament would be able to reassert itself through the efficient use of the framework which it provides for discussion and negotiation.

I have initiated my consultations in order to determine precisely where we stand at the moment and in the hope that I may be able to outline alternative solutions which might achieve consensus in the Conference. When I conclude my first round of consultations tomorrow afternoon, I will be able to assess the prospects of submitting proposals to the Conference for its decision and I will keep you duly informed of progress.

Lastly, I would like to welcome the presence among us today of Mr. Vladimir Pretrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, and Mr. Enrique Román Morey, Assistant Secretary-General, on whose valuable cooperation and constant advice I will now be able to rely in undertaking my tasks.

Would any delegation now wish take the floor? The distinguished representative of Belarus has the floor.

Mr. MALEVICH (Belarus) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the important post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and to express our confidence that your experience and effective leadership will create the necessary conditions for productive work. Allow me to assure you, Mr. President, that the delegation of Belarus will give you every possible support in your endeavours and to wish you every success.

The Republic of Belarus continues to attach considerable importance to its participation in the Conference's work and is focusing its efforts on attaining the goals of comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament and of enhanced transparency and predictability in this sphere.

(Mr. Malevich, Belarus)

In my statement today, I would like to inform the Conference that on 17 May 2001 the upper house of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus - the Council of the Republic - approved the Open Skies Treaty, which had been ratified on 3 May 2001 by the Chamber of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. This decision by our Parliament clearly attests to the commitment of the Republic of Belarus to unswerving compliance with its obligations in the area of international security and arms control. We hope that it will serve to promote the further strengthening of confidence and understanding among States.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish) That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 7 June 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.876

7 June 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 June 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Camilo Reyes Rodríguez

(Colombia)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 876th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have one speaker on my list for today's plenary meeting: the representative of China. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Hu Xiaodi.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): The Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am sure that your extensive experience and outstanding skills will be conducive to promoting the work of the Conference. The Chinese delegation assures you of its full cooperation.

Mr. President, I would like to focus my statement today on the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. China's position on this issue is very clear. We are committed to promoting the negotiation and conclusion by the international community of a legally binding international instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space. In February 2000, the Chinese delegation submitted to the Conference on Disarmament its working paper entitled "China's position on and suggestions for ways to address the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament" (CD/1606), which outlined China's tentative ideas on the above-mentioned international legal instrument. Since then China has conducted further extensive studies on related issues and has come up with some basic elements for the future legal instrument.

Today, on the instructions of the Chinese Government, I am submitting a working paper on possible elements of the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space. The Chinese delegation has already suggested that this paper be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The paper contains elements of such substantive parts of the instrument as the names of the instrument, the preamble, basic obligations, definitions, national implementation measures, the peaceful uses of outer space, confidence-building measures, verification measures, settlement of disputes, the body implementing the legal instrument, etc. It also includes elements of procedural articles found in most international legal instruments, such as those on amendments, duration and withdrawal, signature and ratification, entry into force and authentic texts.

According to the paper, the future international legal instrument could be entitled "Treaty on the Prevention of the Weaponization of Outer Space" and its basic obligations could include four principle undertakings, namely: not to test, deploy or use in outer space any weapons, weapon systems or their components; not to test, deploy or use on land at sea or in the atmosphere any weapons, weapon systems or their components designed for the conduct of warfare in outer space; not to make direct use of any objects launched into orbit for the purpose of combat operations; not to assist or encourage other countries, regions, international organizations or entities to participate in activities prohibited by this legal instrument. Under these basic obligations all space-based weapons and all weapons attacking outer space targets from the earth are to be banned once and for all.

(Mr. Hu, China)

In addition, the paper also contains tentative proposals for definitions of such terms as "outer space", "weapons", "weapon systems" and "components of weapon systems". In view of the complexity and sensitivity of the issue of verification, the Chinese working paper offers no specific ideas in this regard. The issue could be substantiated and rounded off during the subsequent negotiations, through the joint efforts of experts from all countries. Since all other relevant elements have been outlined in the paper, I shall not go into any further detail here.

I wish to emphasize that the main ideas contained in the working paper are still highly tentative and require further revision, fleshing out and polishing, which, we hope, will be provided through the further intensive discussions of all delegations. We hope, by following an open-minded approach and through committed and serious negotiations with all delegations, to conclude at an early date an international legal instrument preventing the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President, it might be asked, what need is there right now to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument preventing the weaponization and arms race in outer space? Is it not premature to propose the ideas referred to above? If we look seriously at the current situation prevailing in the way that outer space is used and other related developments in outer space, it would not be difficult to draw the conclusion that negotiating such an international legal instrument is not merely a necessity, but an urgent necessity in the field of multilateral arms control and disarmament.

With the advent and development of the information era, a great number of civilian activities of all countries in such areas as communications, navigation, meteorology and certain scientific experiments are increasingly dependent on outer space. Whether or not outer space can be used in a rational manner that safeguards its peace and stability will have an important bearing on world peace and the future of all humankind. It is common knowledge, however, that outer space now faces the danger of weaponization. This danger is manifested in two main aspects, namely, the development of the missile defence system and the planned domination of outer space.

The country concerned has already made it clear that the missile defence system currently under research and development will go beyond the constraints of the ABM Treaty. The missile defence system will undoubtedly incorporate space weapons systems; some of those space weapons systems may be based in outer space, providing target information and guidance for weapons systems located on earth or attacking ground targets from space, thus turning outer space into a battlefield. Other space weapons systems may be based in space or on earth, to intercept and destroy space targets.

The long-term strategic military space development plan known as "Vision 2020", which was put forward in 1998, explicitly states that military space capability will constitute the main force in implementing national security policy and military strategy and the main purpose for which this force will be used in the twenty-first century is to secure space superiority. In this context we have also seen the emergence of the operational theory of ensuring space superiority. Similar alarm is caused by the "space war exercise" conducted in late January 2001. This

(Mr. Hu, China)

exercise used outer space as a battlefield and its scenario was set to happen in 2017. The exercise envisaged the use of strategic missile defence systems, land-based laser weapons and other means to attack space targets. Not long ago, in the light of the recommendations of a report on the issue, the country in question adjusted the management and organization mechanism of its national security-related space activities. According to that report, there is a danger of a "space Pearl Harbour" and, for that reason, efforts must be made to develop the means of both deterring and defending against hostile acts in and from space and to develop new military capabilities for operations in space.

The above developments clearly demonstrate that the weaponization of outer space is by no means a remote issue; on the contrary, the danger is imminent and the issue one of great urgency. For any preventive measures to have effect the international community must act right now. Otherwise the window of opportunity which we now have will soon close. If, as was the case with nuclear weapons, outer space weapons were first to be developed and deployed and then placed under controls, this would pose untold difficulties. Is it better for us to sit by and watch outer space being weaponized and to defer the negotiation of outer space disarmament or the prevention of the proliferation of outer space weapons to some future date or should we start negotiations to prevent the weaponization of outer space right now? I think the answer to this question is self-evident.

If any country is genuinely worried about a possible threat to its space interests, these concerns could surely be allayed through the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space, as suggested by China. Regardless of the space capabilities of different countries, such a treaty would be able to ensure that their space interests and property were all equally protected. As a result all countries would genuinely be able to channel their limited resources into the peaceful uses of outer space, with consequent benefits for all humankind. A legally binding international treaty of this type would offer the most effective means of safeguarding the interests of all countries. It would be quite a different matter, however, if the real intentions regarding outer space were to flout the obligations of international legal instruments and to seek unilateral and absolute military and strategic superiority based on political, economic and military strength. In the final analysis, the weaponization of outer space will be detrimental to the interests and security of every country, including the very country that has led the way in introducing weapons into outer space. Its consequences will be extremely serious and will serve no one's interests.

Outer space is the common heritage of humankind and I am convinced that it is the shared aspiration of all peoples for outer space to be peaceful and tranquil and that they do not wish to see it turned into a new field of battle and their lives darkened by the shadows of outer space weapons. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, the Conference on Disarmament should play its proper role in this regard. In this connection, in 2000 China put forward specific proposals on the mandate for an ad hoc committee on PAROS in its working paper CD/1606. In its recent document CD/1644, which China fully supports, the delegation of the Russian Federation also unequivocally came out in favour of the establishment of an ad hoc

(Mr. Hu, China)

committee on PAROS with a negotiating mandate. We appeal once again to all countries to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, based on strict compliance with existing multilateral and bilateral treaties and agreements applicable to outer space.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

If not, I would like merely to say that, as you all know, through the various coordinators and following intensive informal consultation, your President has made a proposal that, if agreed to, would enable us to appoint coordinators to deal with three specific issues of a procedural nature. In the presidential consultations held yesterday, I received initial reactions from the coordinators to this proposal. This reaction was positive and it is also clear that a little more time is needed for us to try to take a specific decision on this matter. It is my intention, therefore, to explore this possibility next week and I sincerely hope that it will then be possible to take a decision at the plenary meeting to be held next Thursday, provided, of course, that this is in line with the wishes of all delegations participating in the Conference.

That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 14 June 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.877
14 June 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 June 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President:

Mr. Camilo Reyes Rodriguez

(Colombia)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 877th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. There are no speakers on my list for today's plenary meeting, but I am informed by the secretariat that France has requested the floor. Accordingly, if the distinguished representative of France has no objection, I would request him to be so kind as to take the floor after we have first considered the following proposal.

Distinguished colleagues, I am very pleased to inform you that, at the presidential consultations held yesterday, my proposal to appoint special coordinators on the review of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, on the expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning received unanimous support, as we have been informed by the coordinators of the groups and China.

I should now like to give official status to the agreement that has been reached and I therefore invite the Conference to take up the draft decision which is now before us in document CD/WP.518.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Conference to adopt the draft decision set out in document CD/WP.518?

It was so decided.

The decision will be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would now like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and the spirit of accommodation displayed in our joint efforts over the past few weeks that have enabled us to adopt the decision on the appointment of three special coordinators. This decision may be seen as a rather modest achievement. I sincerely hope, however, that it will offer considerable help to us in overcoming the current stalemate and giving fresh impetus to our continuing search for an agreement on the programme of work.

The task which now faces us is to reach consensus on the persons who will fill the special coordinator posts. It is my intention to begin intensive consultations without delay through the coordinators in order to ascertain the wishes of members and groups in this regard, so that we can agree on this issue as soon as possible.

I now call upon the distinguished representative of France.

Mr. DAHAN (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, there is a French proverb that says "If a job needs doing, I'm the person for that job.". Today, at our plenary, I'm volunteering.

I have asked for the floor today to draw delegations' attention to the address given on 8 June 2001 by the President of the Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, to the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies, better known by its French acronym IIHDN.

(Mr. Dahan, France)

His remarks clearly set out French thinking on security policy and on arms control and disarmament. With regard to the work of our Conference, the President of the Republic said: "I shall not conceal from you my concern about the stalemate which for months now has gripped the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which were decided upon in 1995, still have not begun and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force, pending completion of the ratification process."

The President's address may be consulted on the internet both in the original French and in an English translation. The site may be found at www.delegfrance-cd-geneve.org. Copies of the address, in French and in English, may also be obtained from the French mission.

Mr. MAIOLINI (Italy): As this is the first time that I have taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to convey the congratulations of the Italian delegation on today's decision and its sincere appreciation for your full commitment to this task.

We always inherit the legacy of our predecessors. In this case you have inherited a good and positive legacy.

We are pleased that you are not discouraged by those pessimists who have said "tout à été fait", "rien de nouveau". It would be inappropriate for us all to talk like the protagonist of Les Ambassades, who had the habit of evaluating the present as a replica of the past "lorsqu' il était jeune vice-consul à Rangoon".

The good legacy you have found comes from those who have had the imagination and the courage to propose new solutions at a time of frustration and disillusion. Those people, and we among them, dared to try to interpret the wish of a silent majority in order to assert the principle that diplomacy is dialogue. Dialogue among everybody but mainly between and among the main nuclear powers. Without dialogue the international scene is marked by tension and danger.

With today's decision we now have a lowest common denominator at which we can start our dialogue.

It is common knowledge that Italy supports the prompt beginning of a programme of work on the three outstanding issues, on the basis of the Amorim proposal. Moreover, as we suggested three months ago, we support the idea of beginning work on the four so-called "non-controversial issues" of our agenda, namely: anti-personnel landmines, nuclear security assurances, transparency in armaments, and reform of the Conference's procedures.

As I have said, a growing number of delegations have lately been showing a growing interest in this proposal, which, as we understand, still remains a possibility for the future.

Notwithstanding a more ambitious programme, Mr. President, we fully support your proposal and the decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament today. My delegation understands that your proposal is the minimum achievable and possible first step, a first block on

(Mr. Maiolini, Italy)

which to build a more substantial construction. The appointment of special coordinators on the agenda, membership and functioning of the Conference in fact represents a procedural instrument which could, in our opinion as in the opinion of the German delegation, also be used for the other "non-controversial issues". The recourse to special coordinators is not in fact a substantive measure but merely a procedural instrument useful when there is no consensus on a substantive programme.

Moreover, when we suggested beginning work on the four non-controversial issues, it was our hope and intention to see movement in several directions, so that we might achieve results in some of them at least. We might possibly have seen that, in a mutual give-and-take process, concessions by some delegations in one area could be rewarded with concessions by other delegations on another item.

Now, Mr. President, your proposal to concentrate all our efforts on only one item of our agenda - a proposal which, once again, Italy supports - leaves us much less room for manoeuvre and could make our task difficult.

Let us remain aware of that as we begin our work. At the same time, we begin our work in the full knowledge that, since we have only one arrow to shoot, we must not miss our target.

Our observers might not be impressed by our limited attempt to reform the Conference on Disarmament. They will be even less impressed, however, if we fail. This necessarily calls for a renewed effort by all delegations and for a maximum of flexibility.

With this in mind, let me assure you, Mr. President, of the full commitment of my delegation to contribute to your success. We must avoid the danger of having an empty Conference on Disarmament, of having to apply to the Conference the words of Pierre Loti on the Sphinx: "The secret of the Sphinx conceals nothing. It is like the great Pyramid, which harbours an empty tomb." With today's decision we have avoided the danger of repeating those words.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished Ambassador of Italy for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the distinguished representative of Germany.

Mr. ACHENBACH (Germany): Let me first congratulate you on the assumption of this important office, especially at a very critical stage in this Conference. I will not mention other very important offices in this context. I would also like to thank you for all the efforts you have undertaken that have led us to the decision that the Conference has just taken, and I would like to use this occasion also to thank all your predecessors on whose efforts you have been able to build.

The decision that the Conference has taken this year is the first decision of its kind that the Conference has been able to take for the last two and a half years. That is why we attach great importance to this decision, because it is, at least, the first step towards breaking out of the

((Mr. Achenbach, Germany))

complete stalemate of the last more than two years. It is also a first step towards re-creating some dialogue in this Conference, a dialogue that has hardly taken place lately. And it is at least an implementation of the decision taken by this Conference at the start of this year's session, namely, to resume its consultations on the reform of the agenda. So we attach greatest importance to this decision.

At the same time, Mr. President, you have yourself said that this is a very modest decision, and this is true. In fact, it is quite difficult to understand, even for an insider, why the Conference was not able to take a decision like that two years ago. So, the conclusion must be - and this is stated also, of course, in the decision we have taken - that this can only be a first step, that the Conference cannot lean back and now just wait for the special coordinators to produce results. We must of course go on trying to solve the major issues. As long as we do not succeed in solving the major issues, we must continue to work and to create a dialogue on other issues. That is why we see this decision only as a very first step in a step-by-step procedure to get this Conference back to real substantive work and to negotiations - to its original function. We believe that this first step should be followed by further steps.

A second step could be - as we have been proposing, together with Italy, for a long time - to take a decision on the other uncontroversial matters. Maybe I should better say "uncontested" items, rather than "uncontroversial", in view of certain comments which have been made in the past. I would like to underline that these items are not "uncontroversial" in substance, but at least since the presidency of the Algerian Ambassador Dembri, they have been considered by the Conference as "uncontested" elements of the future work of the Conference. In fact, if these items were uncontroversial in substance, then we would not need any special coordinators. So, we do believe that we should continue this process that you, Mr. President, have begun and, in considering further steps, the second step could be the appointment, of the two special coordinators on anti-personnel mines and transparency in armaments as well as the creation of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances. If that should be too ambitious, one could consider the creation of such an ad hoc committee also as a third step.

The point here, however, is that we have to realize, after the experience of the last two and a half years, that we cannot solve all problems at the same time. This approach has miserably failed and we are very grateful to you, Mr. President, for leading us on a different course, on a course of step-by-step gradual achievements.

I would like to underline what has been said by the distinguished Ambassador of Italy. The appointment of special coordinators is a purely procedural step. Special coordinators are procedural instruments to help the Conference gain a clear view on a certain item, to help the Conference to get clarity on whether consensus is possible on a certain item or perhaps to realize that no consensus is possible. That can also be the outcome. The appointment of a special coordinator does not in any way prejudice the positions of delegations on substantive items. It does not constitute the beginning of negotiations. The role of the special coordinator is to find out whether consensus can be found on a certain item to start substantive negotiations.

((Mr. Achenbach, Germany))

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to conclude my few remarks in saying that we also fully support all your efforts in the future and those of your successors. We will actively support the special coordinators and, we hope, future special coordinators in their work. We will do our best to contribute ideas and substance to their work and we will support you and you and your successors in trying to solve the two outstanding major issues, as that would enable the Conference to start real work and to perform the task for which it has been created: to negotiate.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Is there any other delegation which wishes to take the floor at this stage? I see none. This, therefore, concludes our work for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 21 June 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.878

21 June 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 21 June 2001, at 10.20 a.m.

President

Mr. Camilo Reyes Rodriguez

(Colombia)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 878th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have the representative of Belgium on my list of speakers for today. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Mr. Damien Angelet.

Mr. ANGELET (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have the honour to take the floor in this forum, I would like first to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and for the excellent work which you have been doing.

I would like to inform you that, in their capacity as co-chairs of the Standing Committee of Experts on the General Status and Operation of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, Zimbabwe and Belgium will be organizing, in conjunction with Nicaragua, an information meeting on the Third Meeting of the States parties, to be held in Managua from 18 to 21 September 2001.

The information meeting will be held on 27 June at 3 p.m. in room VII in the Palais des Nations. All delegations are invited to attend.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that, to date, 117 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention and 140 States have signed, ratified or acceded to it. Belgium encourages all States which are not yet parties to the Convention to ratify it or to accede to it as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

As this does not appear to be the case, I would like to inform you that I have received an official communication from the Minister of Defence of Estonia, who is also acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Jüri Luik, containing a request for the admission of Estonia as a full member of the Conference. Copies of this communication were placed, in the usual manner, in delegations' pigeon-holes on Tuesday. This official communication brings the total number of States requesting admission as full members of the Conference to 22 and, in accordance with previous practice, will be reflected in the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

If not, I would like to propose that we suspend this meeting and reconvene tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

(The President)

The reason for this proposal is that the various consultations which I have conducted over the week suggest that the Conference is now almost in a position to appoint the three coordinators regarding whom a decision was taken last week. It is in fact my impression that in only a few hours we will be in a position to make these three appointments. Accordingly, if I hear no objection from the Conference, I would ask this favour of you and thank you once again for your flexibility and goodwill. I would request you to agree to suspend this meeting and to resume tomorrow at 9.30 a.m., with the sole purpose of taking a decision on the appointment of the three coordinators for the three procedural items, in accordance with the decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament last week.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. on Thursday, 21 June 2001, and resumed at 9.45 a.m. on Friday, 22 June 2001.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The 878th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I would like to inform you that we have concluded the consultations to fill the posts of special coordinators provided for in decision CD/1646 adopted by the Conference at its 878th plenary meeting, on 14 June 2001. I can inform you that the Conference has agreed to appoint Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany as Special Coordinator on the Review of the Agenda of the Conference; Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria as Special Coordinator on the Expansion of the Membership of the Conference and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka as Special Coordinator on the Improved and Effective Functioning of the Conference.

May I take it that the Conference agrees to these appointments?

It was so decided.

I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Ambassador Seibert, Ambassador Draganov and Ambassador Kariyawasam on their appointment; I wish them every success in carrying out their important duties and urge them to commence their work as soon as possible. In this context, I would like to draw members' attention to the last sentence of decision CD/1646, in which the Conference requests the special coordinators to "report to it before the conclusion of the 2001 session".

I now give the floor to the distinguished representative of Turkey.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, the reason I have taken the floor today is to express, on behalf of the Western Group, our gratitude for the contribution you have made to moving the Conference on Disarmament ahead. Your diligence and untiring efforts in this regard are highly appreciated.

We believe that the Western Group, for its part, demonstrated a certain measure of flexibility in obtaining the positive results which, we hope, will be beneficial to the effective functioning of the Conference. As always, flexibility, in our judgement, played a key role in the

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

achievement of this rather modest goal. We therefore hope that, in the future, under similar circumstances, all groups will be able to approach matters in a less rigid manner. In this context, I wish to underline the fact that none of the issues with which we deal or intend to deal within the Conference on Disarmament can be regarded as the permanent responsibility of any one geographical group.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): If no other delegation wishes to speak I would like briefly to thank all of you here in the Conference for your trust and spirit of solidarity which has enabled us to make this modest but important step forward. I may assure you that this is a very timely decision and one that is highly relevant. I would also like to express my thanks to the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Petrovsky, to thank Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, who is currently not in Geneva, for his collaboration and to thank Mr. Jerzy Zaleski. I would also like to thank the entire secretariat team and, of course, the interpreters and other staff members whose work has helped us perform our own tasks; finally, I would like to thank the staff of my own mission and Mr. Camilo Ruiz, my Minister Counsellor for Disarmament Affairs.

It only remains for me to wish the Ambassador of Cuba, Mr. Carlos Amat Forés, every success in the exercise of his duties and to assure him that the Colombian delegation will give every support in ensuring the success of his work.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 28 June 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 9.50 a.m.